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MATILDA,

A TALE OF THE CRUSADES.

S.H-1830

MATILDA,

A TALE OF THE CRUSADES,

A POEM,

IN SIX BOOKS.

BY HENRY INGRAM.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN.

MDCCCXXX.

866.

N. WHITLEY, PRINTER, HALIFAX.

LIVES there, whose heart, in waveless slumber bound,
Ne'er knew the bliss to gen'rous deeds allied?
Whose ear ne'er drank the animating sound
Of Gratitude, low bending at his side,
Mammon his God, self-interest his guide?
'Tis not for such my Muse essays to sing,
And prunes for daring flights her trembling wing.

Lives there, who, at his Country's solemn call,
Whose voice might rouse the silent dust anew,
When each firm breast, an adamantine wall,
Midst deep'ning peril, more undaunted grew,
Hung cow'ring back, nor kindled at the view?
'Tis not for such my Muse essays to sing,
And prunes for daring flights her trembling wing.

Lives there, whose knee ne'er bow'd at Friendship's
shrine?
Who never felt the pulse's madd'ning play
When Beauty's melting sigh, love's answ'ring sign,
Thrill'd ev'ry vein, and chas'd despair away,
And a new Era dawn'd of cloudless day?
'Tis not for such my Muse essays to sing,
And prunes for daring flights her trembling wing.

Come Ye, and O! may Woman list the strain,
True to the kindred charities of life,
Whose station here has not been fill'd in vain,
As parent, child, as husband, friend, or wife,
Or patriot, fearless in the raging strife;
Come, 'tis for you my Muse essays to sing,
And prunes for daring flights her trembling wing.

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MATILDA.

BOOK I.

PALESTINE.

HAIL, holy Land! of wondrous lore the seat;
To thee I turn, yet tremble, as I greet.
Not with more awe the untutor'd Savage bends
When from the deep his God of fire ascends.
'Twas here our Faith to rich perfection grew,
And a world's Saviour stood confest to view.
Hail, holy Land! as slow thy palmy shore
Breaks to my sight, how sweep the days of yore
O'er my full heart! I join the pilgrim band
That gaze, on bended knee, thy silent strand.
Are these the promis'd scenes, the glorious seat
Reserv'd by heav'n for Israel's wand'ring feet?

Are there no Angel tribes that watchful stand
With outspread wings o'er shadowing all the land,
To guard that hallow'd soil from noxious tread,
Where Martyrs triumph'd, where a Saviour bled?
Where are those far-fam'd ports, by Commerce blest,
Whose countless navies darken'd Ocean's breast?
Those crowded Marts, where Nations throng'd amaz'd,
And Man with wonder on his fellow gaz'd?
Where art thou, Tyre? the wonder of the Sea,
The mighty Queen, a World's epitome?
Gem of the wave! where art thou? where the pride
That said, "I am, and there is none beside?"
I turn where once thy pomp imperial stood;
No gleaming radiance streams along the flood.
'Tis desolate and lone; with awful fear
I read thy doom; the arm of God is here.
Yes! that bare rock, by sullen waves beset,
Where the poor fisher spreads his dripping net,
Is all that marks thy site! Oft on his oar
The Seaman rests, and with the days of yore,
When own'd a vassal world thy dread command,
Contrasts thy naked, solitary strand.

No joyous shouts, no triumph greets his ears;
The land, one mighty sepulchre appears.
Alas! exulting o'er each tow'r and stream
The glitt'ring Crescent mocks the morning beam.
The usurping Infidels, with proud disdain,
Trample the cross, insult the holy fane.
There mark that patient, melancholy band,
Who want, and toil, and mockery withstand!
They, like their Lord, these ills unmurm'ring bear;
Blest, if one sweet reward their Tyrants spare;
Round their Redeemer's tomb to watch and kneel:
'Tis all they can, and who shall scorn their zeal?

Rouse, Soldan, rouse! prepare to meet thy doom;
They come! the champions of the Cross, they come!
Embattled Europe pours the countless swarm,
And fell Revenge directs the awful storm.
E'en peaceful Churchmen arm against thy pride,
And Saints and Angels combat at their side.
The Avengers come! from Earth's remotest bound
Their locust armies cumber all the ground.

Rapid they sweep, nor pause nor slumber know,
Defy fatigue, and threaten as they go.
Their Coursers' hoofs bright fiery sparkles fling;
Their wheels whirl dreadful as the whirlwind's wing.
Huge as a weaver's beam, their giant spear;
Their quiver, like an open sepulchre.
With savage joy they bend the impatient bow,
Whet the keen shaft, and meditate the blow.
While yet the mutt'ring storm at distance low'r,
Bid sound the war-trump! wake thy martial pow'r;
The iron tempest hurtles in the air;
Rouse, Soldan, rouse, and for thy doom prepare!

MATILDA.

BOOK I.

NOON'S sultry hour was past: the fresh'ning gale
Pours life and fragrance o'er Dunelmia's vale.
From Eden's tow'rs, amidst his vassal train,
Down the lone glen that fac'd the expanded main
St. Aubyn speeds, where Heorta's neighb'ring steep
Brav'd with its foam-bath'd front the northern deep;
Shelt'ring the circling bay, whose waveless breast
Safe in his anchor'd bark, the Seaman bless'd.
Crowning the cliff, in rich baronial pride,
De Clifford's lordly halls o'erhung the tide

He, thro' the isle, the manly joust proclaim'd,
Nurse of heroic deeds—the sound inflam'd
Each high-soul'd Chief, and through the live-long day
Successive helmets glitter'd on the way.
'Twas now to vengeance rous'd at Sion's woes,
One heart, one hand, a pow'rful nation rose.
The spreading flame a youthful Sov'reign fann'd,
And deeds of Knighthood echoed thro' the land.
There throng'd the thrice-renown'd in danger's field,
And there, the untried youth with naked shield.
'Twas thirst of fame that swell'd each warrior's heart
Save one, and there unknightly thoughts had part.
The fire that lighten'd in St. Aubyn's eyes,
Was born of jealous hate that mock'd disguise.
While yet the rival tow'rs were dim descry'd,
Half mutter'd threats their reckless Lord defy'd.
Not with more deadly glance, the Fiend of night
Ey'd the broad sun and curs'd its searching light.
Why lags that fair-hair'd Boy, while far before
His Father's clatt'ring steed is heard no more?
O'er his smooth cheek scarce manhood's down is thrown,
Speaking life's rugged path as yet unknown.

As the lone track the loit'rer slow pursued,
Skirting the mazy border of a wood,
Bound to a tree, behold of tender years
A stripling stood. A wretch insults his tears;
High o'er his head the threat'ning cord extends,
Whose frequent stripe his bleeding victim rends.
Whence is that sylphlike pair that break to view
With breathless speed and cheeks of glowing hue?
One seems a cherub from celestial bow'r
"New lighted on this orb." The tender flow'r
Scarce bows beneath her tread, and far behind
Her raven tresses stream upon the wind.
Smit with her fairy form, his dazzled sight
Scarce mark'd the youth, companion of her flight.
The same his years—in glittering vest array'd,
His shape, his mien, no vulgar race betray'd.
O! who that maiden's pleading tones could hear,
Nor bid consent be swifter than her pray'r?
As paus'd the Tyrant at the silver sound,
The grateful suff'rer eager she unbound.
His naked arms from galling bondage freed,
He turn'd to thank, then broke away with speed.

" Edmund!" she cried, the work of mercy done,
" We must return—fast sinks the western sun."
Swift as the darting swallow skims the stream
The vision vanish'd, like some airy dream!

As one, that scales some heav'n-kist mountain's head,
Sees far beneath the varied landscape spread.
Fair as the scene from Pisgah's brow survey'd,
When the blest land its promised rest display'd;
Meads, tufted woods whence peeps the ivy'd pile,
The lake's bright mirror, gemm'd with fairy isle,
The vane-crown'd spire that glitters in the beam,
The silver line that marks the sinuous stream,
Dark glens, and sunny glades, the lordly hall,
The murm'ring lapse of frequent waterfall,
The bosom'd cot, the smoke-encircled town,
And speck'd with sheep, the heath's extended brown;
The sands, that gleam along the river's bed
Left by the tide, in length'ning terror spread;
As roves from charm to charm his greedy eye,
Sudden a cloudy vapour from on high

Curtains the mountain's head with veil of night,
And shuts the glorious vision from his sight.
Each word, each feature, on his heart imprest,
A new-born feeling dawn'd o'er Albert's breast.
Till lost in gloom, slept mountain, stream and wood,
His restless search the unknown maid pursu'd.
No answering shout reply'd—to wilder speed
He urg'd, in vain pursuit, his panting steed.
Sudden the startling trump breaks fitful near,
And sounds of boist'rous mirth assail the ear.
On Heorta's cliff, by angry ocean beat,
Quick glancing lights reveal'd De Clifford's seat.
He pass'd the barrier gates—the laugh, the song,
O'er flowing cups the midnight cheer prolong.
But he, with toil worn frame, and heart opprest,
Impatient heard and sought more grateful rest.
The cheek's deep hectic, and the broken sleep,
Mark the wild dreams, that o'er the slumb'rer creep.
Smile not for him those lips of roseate glow;
'Tis Edmund's presence lights her sunny brow.
His the bright sparkle of that jetty eye,
Whose ev'ry look is eloquence and joy.

For Edmund too, that wild flow'r wreath she weaves,
And many a proof of sweet affection gives.
From his lone couch he springs, with vengeful air
The envied crown from Edmund's brow to tear;
He wakes! how stares the wilder'd dreamer round!
How throbs his heart with fierce tumultuous bound!

As o'er the redd'ning east the Day-spring broke,
He climb'd the neighb'ring steep. The frequent stroke
Of early armourer, the steed's shrill neigh
Breathing impatience for the coming fray,
The trumpet's clang, whose heart-inspiring sound
Transported Echo caught and flung around,
Swept mingling by. And still the tumult grew,
While his soul kindled at the stirring view.
In quaint device array'd, the busy Page
Hurried from court to court. Here garr'lous Age
Dwelt on the days gone by; none paus'd to hear
The unheeded tale. There, fiercely brawling near,
The rival grooms, of fav'rite Knight or steed
Vaunt the proud claim to win the victor meed.

Forth from the crowd, his Father's faithful Squire
A courser led, whose eye-balls darted fire.
" Albert, lov'd Youth!" was Malcolm's eager cry;
" I've sought thee long, and greet thee here with joy.
" This day will feats of mimic war be shewn,
" Feats, such as thou, ere long, wilt make thine own.
" Yes, by St. Hilda, tho' thy honour'd line
" Be rich in fame, 'twill yet more brilliant shine."
A truce, good Malcolm! but thy praises done,
Say, has my Father blam'd his truant Son?
" Dismiss all fear; for thee I've search'd in vain,
" And oft enquir'd, yet mine alone the pain.
" Far other thoughts inflame thy Father's soul
" Where fearful schemes, I ween, of vengeance roll.
" When, yestereve, we reach'd this lordly pile
" Throng'd with the bravest chieftains of our isle,
" Its noble Owner, at his King's command,
" Was summon'd hence to Ebor's neighb'ring strand,
" And left, as Umpire in the coming fray
" Our prelate Pudsey: On yon sparkling bay
" Whose galley rides, and whose example leads
" The church to emulate our warrior's deeds.

" Thy Father heard; the flame that heav'd his breast,
" And gnashing teeth some foil'd design express'd.
" The live-long night I watch'd his eye's wild glare;
" No slumber seal'd them; all was restless there.
" Nor did thy Father's limbs one moment feel
" The joy of freedom from the casing steel."

Thro' the wide courts the herald signal rang;
The crowd impatient to the tiltyard sprang.
There close the serried ranks each other press,
In eager hope forgetful of distress,
Circling the ring; but O! what forms of love
Bright glancing, grac'd the balcony above!
There peerless Dames their radiant charms display'd,
Whose eyes, more potent than Damascus' blade,
Now fierce as summer suns, now mildly bright
Like twinkling stars that gem the vault of night,
Midst iron Warriors beam'd, and round the scene
In cuirass clad, was many a Prelate seen.
Like the tir'd bee, uncertain where to rest
When countless blossoms bare the honey'd breast,

From fair to fair the dazzled vision pass'd,
Each blest with charms more brilliant than the last.
But as that bee, the flow'r of sweetest hue
Awhile may quit, yet turns again to woo,
There Albert turn'd with still-renew'd delight,
Where chain'd a beauteous canopy his sight.
Above, a silken banner hung display'd,
Whose ample space, by cunning hands array'd,
The cross resplendent bore, the glorious meed
By royal Richard giv'n—to him decreed
The future champion, whose victorious shield
Return unsullied from the listed field.
'Twas Beauty's dazzling court; In soften'd state
Like Beauty's Queen, the noble Hostess sate;
Around her glitter'd many a lovely guest,
The cross suspended o'er the snowy breast.
Whence that quick start? why o'er his changing cheek
Does the wild flush of sudden rapture break?
'Twas she! those charms which thro' the shades of night
Mock'd his vain search, dawn sweetly on his sight!
The high born maid, Matilda, met his view,
And rank o'er beauty richer lustre threw.

The brazen gates unclos'd, which fac'd the west,
A breathless calm the deep suspense express'd.
Like sons of morn, with helm and pointless lance
Sudden a troop of graceful youths advance :
Brac'd on his arm, each held a silver shield,
As yet no honors grac'd the naked field.
While round the ring, they press the gen'rous steeds,
Each bosom panting for heroic deeds,
Their gallant mein applauding crowds survey,
And hail the Godfreys of no distant day.
But chief, the partial mothers from above
Eye the brave band with looks of dewy love.
When near the canopy the Leader pass'd,
A sudden blush Matilda's cheek o'ercast.
Swift from her mother's side with sparkling eyes
Th' impatient Albert mark'd the virgin rise ;
From her fair breast she tears a budding rose,
The silent emblem to that leader throws ;
Does not her mother's alter'd cheek disown
This ill-tim'd warmth ? there glooms no chiding frown ;
But as her child, with more endearing wile
Clung round her neck, there beam'd the ready smile.

What fearful magic did that smile impart
To crush the hopes, that play'd around his heart!
That ready smile, like Fate's all-withering blast,
O'er every sense a freezing torpor cast.

As rapt he mus'd, the fairy troop retir'd;
Again the Herald trump fresh hopes inspir'd.
With vizors clos'd, and lances plac'd in rest,
Swift to the course the headlong champions press'd.
They wheel around—they pause with loosen'd rein;
The signal sounds; each gazer breathes with pain.
The proud steeds rush impetuous as the wind;
Their dark manes stream, like wreaths of mist, behind.
As when, hoarse thund'ring from some Alpine brow,
Two torrents sweep, and mix their rage below,
The boiling waters foam; the thick'ning spray
Mounts far above, and dims the eye of day—
Dread was the shock—a cloud obscures the sky;
Men, steeds, and arms, in mingled ruin, lie.
One Knight alone still tower'd erect; his name
Rings thro' the crowd tumultuous; Albert's frame

Thrill'd at the sound—O! well that Knight he knew;
Sable his steed, his armour sable too.
Pride swells his heart;—his eyes resume their fire;
He shares the exulting triumph of his Sire.
No hostile spear had reach'd his Father's mail;
'Gainst his firm buckler could no force avail.
E'en his brave steed, with eyeballs darting flame
Seem'd proudly conscious of its rider's fame.
His was the palm;—for him that ceaseless roar;
Yet his soul sicken'd for one victim more.
Why sleep those shouts with which the welkin rung?
What sudden wonder seals each clam'rous tongue?
A hoary Herald, blazon'd on whose breast
St. Aubyn's badge, the eagle, shone confest,
Speeds to the ring; his trumpet's lengthen'd sound,
Swells to the skies, and wakes amazement round.
"Lady!" he cry'd, and, taunting as he spoke,
The noble hostess scann'd with piercing look,
"The Lord St. Aubyn, knighthood's fav'rite Son,
"Whose Eagle shrinks not from yon blazing sun,
"Demands through me his meed, the victor's right,
"Yon banner, won by his resistless might.

" Our ancient hall such countless glories grace,
" Scarce will the stranger find a resting place.
" How oft we there have stunn'd the midnight hour
" With tales exhaustless of our Chieftain's pow'r!
" Lady, with flowing bowl and festive song,
" This day's rich triumph will the feast prolong.
" Let not that scornful brow my warmth reprove;
" The Old will babble o'er the theme they love.
" This day I fondly hop'd, but age will dream,
" St. Aubyn's Star had shed a brighter beam.
" Where is that Knight of proud imperious mein,
" High o'er whose crest the snowy Swan is seen?
" O foul dishonour! from the listed field
" Shrinks not the recreant, with inglorious shield?
" Or if thy care has caus'd his willing flight,
" Lady, 'tis well—O! had he brav'd the fight,
" E'en now that Swan its dying lay had pour'd,
" And swell'd the triumph of St. Aubyn's Lord!"

As when, precursor of the tempest's roar,
With hollow murmurs rings the cavern'd shore,

Now mutt'ring low, now pealing high and loud,
Indignant voices roll'd along the crowd.
The eager rush, the intrepid brow proclaim
The stern avengers of the insulted Dame.
What distant cry is that, which from without
Breaks o'er the ear, and stays the bursting rout?
The hostess starts—a turret's neighb'ring stair
She mounts,—She waves her kerchief high in air,
" 'Tis he!" the answ'ring crowd her transport share:
The snowy Swan, his crest, on milk-white steed
A Warrior sweeps along, with thund'ring speed.
Here was no parley—with impetuous haste
The lance in rest the rival chieftains plac'd.
Death laugh'd triumphant o'er each threat'ning spear;
They fear'd disgrace, and knew no other fear.
Forward they rush—with half-averted look
The crowd turn'd shudd'ring from the coming stroke.
In giant strength elate, the sable Knight
By one grand effort strove to close the fight
And crush his hated foe—presumptuous dream!
Against the opposing shield, his massy beam

Was shiver'd to the grasp. O! where is now
Thy pride, rash boaster? o'er thy rival's brow
Still beams that tow'ring Swan with snowy breast,
The cow'ring Eagle droops upon thy crest.
In vain thy buckler's iron plates oppose
The hostile lance—through every fold it goes,
Pierces thy mail, inflicts a gaping wound,
And hurls thee senseless to the trembling ground.
O! 'twas a conquest, that from realms above
Consenting Angels might with smiles approve!
From mouth to mouth the glorious triumph flies,
Mounts on the gale, and rends the vaulted skies:
While from the ring, o'erwhelm'd with deep despair,
Their wounded Lord attendant vassals bear.

O! long, in secret solitude apart,
Rage, grief, and shame, consum'd St. Aubyn's heart.
That dire disgrace the day with horror crown'd,
At night, a phantom, o'er his pillow frown'd.
And he, whose haughty Soul once dar'd the Skies,
Now shrank suspicious from his vassal's eyes.

Mark that pale youth—he shares his Sire's retreat,
And weeps with bitter tears, his dread defeat.
Scarce dawn'd his star of love, eternal night
Sweeps o'er the scene and whelms its rosy light.
Yet not to listless vacancy's controul
Stoop'd the proud honours of his glowing soul;
As his fair limbs to manhood rip'ning grew,
His love of arms encreasing fervour knew.
The lance, the steed, the ling'ring day beguil'd,
And oft the moody Father gaz'd, and smil'd.
But when the holy trump, to Sion's wall
Rous'd England's warrior-sons, the glorious call
St. Aubyn hears—his thirst of fame returns,
And all his soul with wonted ardour burns.
His kindling eyes a sickly lustre shed;
Again, like one awaken'd from the dead,
His long-neglected arms the Chief resumes,
And midst his vassals dance his raven plumes.

On that blest shore, where Christian Martyrs bled,
Those raven plumes the foremost battle led.

Where'er they wav'd, the turban shrank dismay'd,
And red with slaughter blush'd St. Aubyn's blade.
Fierce was the fight near Acho's trembling wall,
When shouting foemen hail'd the Warrior's fall.
Tho' conquest crown'd the field, in silent grief
His gallant comrades mourn'd the breathless chief,
Counted the wounds, that grac'd his gory breast,
And pray'd an end like his, with deathless glory blest.
That fatal day, when, stretch'd o'er piles of slain,
The Father fell, and valour's arm was vain,
The blooming Son, with fearless heart pursu'd
His sable courser, bath'd in streams of blood.
Six Pagan Chiefs, conspicuous o'er the field
For tow'ring size, rich vest, and moony shield,
With boiling bosoms mark'd the hostile pair
Like meteors, sweeping thro' the ranks of war.
Furious they swear, in barb'rous compact bound,
To whelm these Christian Knights, and stay the carnage round.
Five bit the dust—the sixth, with wary blow,
Laid the brave Sire, with slaughter wearied, low.

But, as his coward taunts insult the slain,
The Son, wild rushing, intercepts the strain;
Home to the recreant's heart, his sword of fire
He drives, the avenger of his martyr'd Sire.
The Lion King, who kindred valour lov'd,
With flattering voice the gallant deed approv'd.
" Henceforth, the glitt'ring crescents that adorn
" Thy prostrate foe, by thee, brave youth, be worn.
" Thy snowy shield with this memorial crown,
" And with thy Father's honours blend thine own."
From royal lips, in glory's bright career,
How thrill'd this praise the modest champion's ear!
'Twas now, with outstretch'd arm, and friendly feet,
Midst other chiefs De Clifford came to greet.
His open brow no gloomy rancour wore;
The grave was clos'd, and fell revenge was o'er.
Those thoughts, by reason's frown so long suppress,
Now flam'd resistless o'er St. Aubyn's breast.
Was it Matilda's Sire, whose rooted hate
He deem'd unshaken as the doom of fate,
Who came his hours of orphan grief to share,
And sweetly sooth'd the rugged front of war?

Long had he burn'd that Sire's esteem to gain,
But love despairing mourn'd his wishes vain;
When sorrow deepen'd round, with sudden light
Hope's dawning star dispers'd the gath'ring night.

When tardy conquest bless'd the Christian pow'rs,
And the cross wav'd o'er Acho's captive tow'rs,
Along the coast by royal Richard led,
The pilgrim warriors, like a deluge, spread.
No breathing pause awaits their levell'd spears,
Where'er they turn, the Soldan's host appears.
Eve came, but brought no rest, and startled night
Heard the wild din that spoke the lengthen'd fight.
The Lion King, his path with slaughter red,
Rear'd his proud axe, and strew'd the field with dead.
With front oppos'd, with madd'ning frenzy fir'd,
The baffled Soldan with slow step retir'd.
As the fell tigress, long in vain pursu'd,
Now hears the blood-hounds yell along the wood,
Which with sure instinct snuff the tainted dew,
And at their heels impend the Hunter crew;

To guard the covert, where her young repose,
She springs with tenfold fierceness on her foes ;
The Moslem Chief, round Joppa's lordly tow'rs
For one stern effort, summon'd all his pow'rs
From Christian grasp the lovely gem to save,
Or midst its ruins meet a glorious grave.
" Soldiers of Alla!" how his words of fire
Through the wide ranks, contempt of death inspire !
" Think, should ye fall, on Azrael's sable wing
" Instant to bow'rs of Paradise ye spring.
" Where gardens smile with spring eternal blest,
" The brave shall revel in delicious rest.
" There black-eyed maids, amid the twilight grove,
" At once shall light, and quench the flames of love.
" Rivers of wine in blushing currents flow ;
" Each wish be blest, yet still no languor know :—
" Now with your sabres blot your late disgrace,
" And in the sea o'erwhelm yon Christian race !"
With holy frenzy fir'd, his legions heard,
And with loud cries demand the battle word.
Where Joppa's spires are bath'd in morning light,
Tumultuous crowds, expectant of the fight,

Hang o'er the walls and cheer the host below,
Invoking Alla's aid to nerve the blow.

While thus the Soldan, sooth'd the gathering dread,
Some hardy warriors, by De Clifford led,
Outstripp'd their fellows, eager to surprise
Fair Joppa's tow'rs—they reach'd th' expected prize;
Where now their tow'ring hopes? on ev'ry side
Far as the eye could reach, the billowy tide
Of Pagan armies roll'd—the raging flood
Clos'd round the red-cross band, that dauntless stood,
Like a lone isle amid the pathless main,
To meet the rushing storm. Escape seem'd vain.
As round with deaf'ning shouts the Pagans sweep,
The fearless Franks indignant silence keep.
Brothers in arms, one feeling fir'd each breast;
Sacred their cause, to Heav'n they left the rest.
The foremost files their steeds resistless broke,
And scarce created might could stand the shock.
There, where from glitt'ring canopy afar
The Soldan marked the ebbing tide of war,

O'er piles of dead De Clifford urg'd his way
By one proud blow, to end th' eventful fray.
Anxious yet firm, his eagle glance had scann'd
The countless swarms, that hemm'd his little band.
With dark'ning frown, the wrathful Monarch view'd
His falt'ring ranks, by coward fears subdued;
" Degen'rate race! O! whither do ye run?
" Turn, and survey, the feeble foe ye shun;
" Here is no Richard, but a slender train
" O'er spent with toil, that wield the lance with pain;
" Turn to the charge; your dastard dread resign—
" Or be the glory of the conquest mine.
Aloft he bade the prophet-standard stream,
And round his throne devoted falchions gleam.
His brazen drums, in peals of thunder speak;
Thrill'd with the sound, shame dyes each recreant cheek.
That hallow'd strain, by Heav'n itself inspir'd,
On Beder's plain, the warrior Prophet fir'd.
'Twas his proud note of victory which flew
From sea to sea, and well each Moslem knew!
The battle tide returns—from all the crowd
The hymn of conquest swells with clamour loud.

Fierce o'er the Franks the storm impetuous broke:
They reel'd and stagger'd with the mighty shock.
Fast round their Chief the red-cross champions fell,
While savage foemen peal'd their funeral knell;
Each with a look, that yet that shout defy'd,
Gaz'd on his Chief for vengeance, as he died.
And He, tho' yawn'd the grave beneath his feet,
Still cheer'd his fainting friends and scorn'd retreat.
For one last effort as the toil-worn knight
Recall'd his ebbing pow'rs, his eagle-sight
Deem'd wav'ring and confus'd the opposing crowd:
Faint and more faint their headlong clamours flow'd;
With less'ning rage their blood-red falchions burn'd,
And many an anxious look was rearward turn'd.
Amidst each pause, the clarion echoing shrill
Rode on the breeze—along the distant hill
Flash'd glitt'ring mail, and to his ravish'd eye
The red-cross banner stream'd—how wild his cry!
"'Tis he! our Richard comes! his mighty powers
"Sweep to our aid and victory is ours!"
Scar'd by the name which fraught with deep alarm,
Palsied the stroke and chill'd th' uplifted arm,

The Pagan host, with wild'ring terror pale,
Disperse, like leaves before the autumnal gale.
Now vengeance rag'd, unknowing how to spare,
And victory wreath'd the brow of wan dispair.
Yet still the Soldan's standard mock'd the day.
And round his canopy, in firm array,
His faithful guards, a serried phalanx, frown'd;
Still pour'd his drums their death-defying sound.
Disdaining flight and fir'd with deepest hate,
This close knit band renew'd the stern debate.
Fierce flam'd the combat; each in turn prevails,
And startled Conquest pois'd the dubious scales.
Amidst the turban'd host, in glitt'ring pride,
A gentle youth the shock of arms defy'd.
His better hand a quiv'ring lance sustain'd;
His practis'd left a fiery steed restrain'd
Fair as untrodden snow—the aching sight
Turn'd from his arms that flash'd resistless light.
Of finest web, enrich'd with jewell'd store,
A silken scarf across his breast he wore.
A dove with silver wings, his moony shield
Display'd, emblazon'd on an azure field:

And o'er his polish'd casque, in soften'd shade
His milk-white plumes with sportive zephyrs play'd.
Like a bright meteor round night's ebon car
The vision flam'd amid the ranks of war.
Edmund, who deem'd him of illustrious blood,
Spurn'd meaner conquest, and with speed pursued.
A watchful band, that mark'd his fierce career,
Close round the youth, and disappoint his spear.

As light'ning swift, arriv'd the expected aid:
Yet still the foe no falt'ring look betray'd.
The Soldan's voice each backward step controuls,
And to new efforts fires the fainting souls.
But now, resistless with the lance and sword,
The vengeful Franks their force united pour'd.
As dying embers, if a breath inspire,
Break into glow whose splendours soon expire,
The Pagan ranks, infuriate with despair,
With more than mortal prowess onward bear.
Across his steed, stunn'd by a mighty blow,
De Clifford droops with crest to earth bow'd low.

Now gleam'd the thirsty falchion o'er his head,
Whose stroke had hurl'd him to the silent dead;
Like Heav'n's red bolt, whose flash scarce meets the sight
Ere ruin dire ensues, a sable Knight
Sever'd the arm that aim'd the fatal wound,
And sav'd the Chief, in deathlike slumber bound.
'Twas now that Saladin, with rankling heart,
Saw from his grasp the palm of conquest part.
His brave defenders pour'd their blood in vain,
Their ranks were thinn'd, their corses strew'd the plain.
The storm roll'd on, and midst the bursting tide
His lov'd Ismena he no more descry'd.
Her to his loves, near Nilus' date-crown'd shore,
Pride of his heart, the dying Selma bore.
Selma, whose loss his fiercest anguish mov'd,
For ne'er was woman lov'd, as she was lov'd!
From those sweet scenes, where to his shudd'ring eyes
Still walk'd the vision of departed joys,
The mourner fled, amid the battle-cry
To lose remembrance of the days gone by.
'Twas for her sake he spurn'd all other charms,
No other female fill'd his widow'd arms!

He turn'd disgusted from the flatt'ring train;
The feast allur'd, the goblet blush'd in vain.
No jewell'd pomp the sigh of envy woke,
But coarsest robes his stern denial spoke.
The chrystal brook his simple draught supplied,
And pray'r and fasts his serious hours divide.
'Twas now ambition master'd all his soul,
The thirst of conquest rag'd beyond controul.
Like a dread Queen, magnificent in woe,
Soon captive Sion mourn'd his victor blow,
Where'er he mov'd, thro' all the toils of war,
The young Ismena grac'd the monarch's car.
E'en then no circling gem her tresses crown'd,
But a light casque her sunny temples bound.
A golden quiver on her back she wore,
Her gentle grasp a polish'd javelin bore:—
With fearless skill she rein'd the fiery steed,
With aim unerring flew her feather'd reed.
And while, unconscious of her opening charms,
The martial Fair inspir'd love's soft alarms,
With heart unmov'd she mock'd the pleasing pain,
And rival Princes woo'd her smile in vain.

Such was the maid whose dancing plumes of snow
The Father sought, with looks of anxious woe.
Hush'd were his brazen drums; with blessed light
Nor more his standard cheer'd his warriors' sight.
E'en he, encircled by a faithful few,
Sprang on his steed, and from the carnage flew.
The Pagans fled amain! triumphant Fear
Led the pale van, and Havoc clos'd the rear.

The blooming youth, no brave defender near,
Now felt the shock of Edmund's lightning spear.
Prostrate he fell, and o'er the blood-red plain
His milk-white courser fled, with dangling rein.
His active foe exulting at the view,
Leap'd from his steed, his glitt'ring weapon drew.
Why fades the sternness from his alter'd look?
What sudden cause arrests the deadly stroke?
He drops his sword, "alas! pale flow'r," he cries,
"What hand has torn thee from more genial skies
"To brave war's chilly blast? some mother's cheek
"Is haply wet for thee—thy fate would break

" Her doting heart!" kneeling with anxious haste
He rais'd the unconscious youth, his helm unlac'd;
The parted helm remov'd a net of gold;
A show'r of jetty tresses downward roll'd
In glossy tide, shading the marble cheek
Slow kindling into life; He strove to speak—
Amazement tied his tongue! the martial vest
No longer hides her sex; new charms arrest
His ravish'd gaze: a pulse unfelt before
Throbb'd at his heart, and thrill'd its inmost core.
The beauteous Pagan woke; in wild alarm
On Edmund gaz'd, and from his circling arm
Indignant sprang: " Ah me! unhappy maid,
" To savage foes, to worse than death betray'd!
" Dost thou, my Father, press the fatal plain,
" Or like thy child, a captive curse thy chain?"
Lady! tho' mine the victory, yet still
These lips shall swear devotion to thy will.
Deem me no savage foe; the Christians claim
In gentle courtesy the foremost name.
" Thy tongue is traitor to thy heart! e'en now,
" Had not our Prophet sooth'd the angry blow.

" Thy spear had reach'd my life! its spotted vest
" The Lynx shall change, ere o'er the Christian breast
" One gen'rous impulse break! O! where that knight
" Whose sable arms gleam'd dreadful in the fight?
" Whose gallant bearing I with wonder view'd,
" As like a God, he stemm'd the tide of blood!
" Whose arm to thee and thine such timely aid
" Bestow'd, as sav'd ye from the Moslem blade!
" Could I to him my captive weapon yield,
" How would he soothe the fortune of the field!"

In wild amaze he heard the impassion'd maid;
Her words, her looks, the struggling soul betray'd.
O! could the slaughter'd heaps that strew'd the plain,
Life's parting groans assail her heart in vain?
E'en at her feet a turban'd warrior lies,
Flings the loud curse, and dying, still defies
The robber-foe! 'twas like the voice of Fate
The warning swept her ear, but all too late.

Love laugh'd supreme: 'twas he, that praise inspir'd
Of one whose sword, with rooted vengeance fir'd,
Hung on her flying friends, who proudly swore
To quench the flaming crescent in their gore!

" But let me hence!" the indignant Captive cried,
And her disdainful warmth new charms supplied,
" Let deepest shades this dire disgrace conceal;
" Or, if like men, the Christian race can feel,
" Restore me to my father!" No consent
Leap'd from his tongue: his looks were earthward bent.
" O! stain to arms!" she cry'd, " thou shrink'st dismay'd
" From Honour's voice, by all, save thee, obey'd!
" Where now thy boasted courtesy? thy fame
" Of gentle deeds? thy braggart tongue may claim
" The proudest meed, but o'er thy selfish heart
" Ne'er did the sun-bright beams of glory dart!
" Haste, sweep to thy revenge: give wrath the rein;
" With woman's blood thy thirsty weapon stain!"
She said, and rent aside her azure vest,
Nor falter'd, as she bar'd the snowy breast.
As o'er his view its fair Elysium rose,
With fiercer flame his wild delirium glows.
Could the lov'd Cause his naked heart have view'd,
E'en she had pitied, nor reproach renew'd.
What forms are those that cross, with gradual way,
The corse-strewn field, that, pausing oft, survey

The unconscious dead, as if, with ling'ring pain,
They sought some lov'd one in the conflict slain?
Sudden a dark-ey'd Fair, with thrilling cries,
Breaks from the midst! with fearless swiftness flies,
Clings round the Captive's knees with close embrace,
Gazing in silent rapture on her face,
" Aza, thrice welcome! what can e'er repay
" Thy long-tried faith? thro' scenes of dread dismay
" Thy love no terror knows, while all beside
" Their lonely mistress flee; with glowing pride
" I hail thee friend: methinks at sight of thee
" My chains grow light; I once again am free."
" Talk not of chains!" the weeping Aza cry'd,
" O! let yon Sun his glorious features hide,
" Ere thou lov'd Mistress, sunk in deepest woe,
" Swell the proud triumph of the Christian foe!
" Whate'er thy fate, thy Aza comes to prove,
" Nor chains, nor death, can shake her duteous love."
" O! Aza, say," Ismena starting cry'd,
" Know'st thou yon Christian Knight? was he thy guide
" Thro' this wide waste of blood? that fearful foe
" Whom we should curse, and I example shew!

" Alas! I cannot curse—where hate should reign,
" Spontaneous blessings break, and art is vain."
" O! royal Mistress, when with terror pale,
" Some breathless fugitives, the dismal tale
" Spread thro' the camp, that o'er our countless host
" The cross had triumph'd, and the field was lost,
" I flew to search for thee! the hostile spear
" No apprehension woke—all other fear
" Was in thy fate absorb'd: with headlong speed
" Amid the wilder'd rout, thy milk-white steed
" Swept by; how chang'd, since glitt'ring like the day
" He bore thee to the field! the trappings gay
" Now soil'd with dust and blood! the broken rein—
" Alas! I deem'd thee dead! with burning brain
" I forc'd my onward way, nor turn'd aside
" Till in the Christian van that knight I spy'd
" Fierce thund'ring on our friends—I rush'd to meet,
" And prostrate fell before his courser's feet
" Demanding thee—he heard my frantic pray'r,
" Thy name and lineage, sooth'd my loud despair,
" And paus'd in glory's bright career to lead
" My steps to thee, and would'st thou curse the deed?

"He comes! behold him here!" the sable Knight
Approach'd—the blood-stain'd shield, with crescents bright,
Won by his own good sword, the eagle crest,
Well Edmund knew—St. Aubyn stood confest.

Why springs not Edmund, with a brother's love,
His brave deliv'rer's warm embrace to prove?
When o'er De Clifford hopeless ruin clos'd,
His slender band to murd'rous hordes expos'd,
Whose timely succour turn'd the tide of fight,
And whelm'd the Crescent's vaunting hopes in night?
Yes, Edmund felt, for he that peril shar'd,
How vast his merit, who so nobly dar'd,
He felt but own'd not—the disorder'd maid
He watch'd, till all was hate; the cheek array'd
With new-born blushes, the fire-darting eyes,
And her wild panting bosom, scorn disguise.

"O! gentle Lady," said the unconscious Knight,
"Be ours to soothe the horrors of the fight.
"What tho' our race, with never-dying fire
"Thy hostile name pursue, thy noble Sire
"The royal Saladin this day shall own
"Our deeds of war by courtesy outdone.

" Comrade in arms! tho' glorious be the prize,
" Yet Christian virtue in denial lies.
" The conflict o'er, O! let the warrior pause,
" Drop the red-lance, and yield to mercy's laws.
" 'Twas here where blessed truths were heard to flow,
" What purer seat can mercy find below?
" Lady! that trusty band that hither speed,
" I late dispatch'd to seek thy truant steed.
" Nor fruitless is their search; its snowy hue
" Along yon mountain path, now breaks to view.
" Soon will the gale of freedom round thee play,
" But with thee bear remembrance of this day.
" Should some lorn Christian mourn thy victor chain,
" Let not this day's memorial plead in vain."
Ismena heard: O never female soul
Like hers, as passion sway'd, defy'd controul!
Fierce as that sun, which flam'd with downward ray,
Her glowing heart, to wild extremes a prey,
No medium knew. No mild maternal care
Rein'd its wild pulse, but all was lawless there.
Yet like that sun, by limit uncontroll'd,
With copious tide her lavish bounty roll'd.

Child of caprice, enjoyment pall'd the mind;
Her wish one moment gain'd, the next resign'd.
"Would that thy God were mine!" she faintly sigh'd;
"To hear thee, see thee, dead to all beside!"
At fancy's beck, a bow'r delicious rose,
Whose fairy scenes a maze of sweets disclose.
The leafy roof a mellow twilight threw,
And clust'ring flow'rs, of ev'ry scent and hue,
Studded the velvet turf, while notes of love
In melting murmurs die along the grove.
The wanton air seems pregnant with desire,
And breathes, in gentle sighs, voluptuous fire.
To such a bow'r might young Delight repair,
And Beauty hold her sweetest revels there.
There sat reclin'd the visionary maid;
The Christian hero by her side was laid.
Fresh springing joys, all wonted joys above,
Thrill through her frame, and all her soul is love.
While for his brow a mingled wreath she twines,
Oft lip to lip, and cheek to cheek he joins.
The busy world, and glory's dazzling charms
Lost in the Eden of her circling arms!

Fir'd with the coinage of her heated brain,
Scarce could her breast her throbbing heart contain.
" O! bow'r," she sigh'd, " of bliss beyond compare!
" God of the Christians! hear my fervent pray'r;
" Thy champion's soul to kindred warmth incline,
" And I with him will worship at thy shrine!"
With eyes of flame, as on some desp'rate deed
Intent, she sprang upon the well-known steed,
And rush'd impetuous o'er the sounding plain
Ere startled Edmund could her flight restrain!

" Now let our wounded friend," St. Aubyn cry'd,
" The battle won, our mutual cares divide."
But Edmund heard not—in his straining eyes
Sat his whole soul: the beauteous vision flies,
Fades less'ning to his view, now melts in air!
He turns, and with a groan of deep despair
Speeds to his tent. There warring passions crowd
Till thought is kin to madness: curses loud
Burst from his lips: now with unconscious hands
He grasps his half-drawn steel, and fierce demands

His rival foe, whose happier fate supplied
Unask'd, that bliss to raging love denied,
Who stood 'twixt him and heav'n! now o'er his soul
Fond tender thoughts and melting visions stole.
Soft answ'ring sighs the dawn of love confess,
Nor shrinks the maiden from his warm caress.
For him those lips' nectareous rubies glow,
His the eye's languish, and the bosom's snow.
'Twas purest bliss, unchill'd by doubts and fears,
And vanquish'd nature softens into tears.

His glowing heart with gentlest feelings fraught,
De Clifford's tent the youthful warrior sought.
There o'er the wounded hero bending low,
St. Aubyn watch'd with looks of anxious woe.
His soul's enchantment fled; his alter'd mood
St. Aubyn mark'd, and wonder'd as he view'd.
Scarce did he move the extended arm to meet,
Or with kind words the feeble welcome greet.
But when De Clifford, in impassion'd strain
Which seem'd awhile to lull the sense of pain,

On Edmund call'd, the pleasing task to aid,
And bless that gallant youth, who undismay'd
By hostile myriads, shrank with timid look
When Gratitude its thrilling music woke,
Sullen he heard: his wildly flashing gaze
Turn'd where St. Aubyn stood, but not to praise;
His quiv'ring lip his inward strife reveal'd;
With mutter'd threats he dar'd him to the field.
Then from the tent with frantic gesture flew,
Yet paus'd once more defiance to renew.

Meanwhile the red-cross Warriors onward sweep,
The glorious harvest of their toil to reap.
In vain pale Famine tracks their course with dead,
Their sandy wilds the burning deserts spread.
In vain their desp'rate foes, than these more fell,
Hang on their path, and death's proud triumph swell.
Onward they rush! they know nor pause nor fear;
Soon Sion's walls shall close their bright career.
But where is he that mock'd the battle-storm,
And courted Danger's most appalling form?

Whose well-known crest, like hope's inspiring star,
Shone in the van, and cheer'd the fainting war?
The youthful Edmund; with impatient cries
From rank to rank the anxious question flies.
But he, forgetful of his past renown,
No longer pants to win the Martyr's crown.
No more his voice inflames the toil-worn band,
And the lance slumbers in his listless hand.

'Twas now stern Winter bade contention cease,
And hush'd awhile ferocious thoughts to peace.
Yet 'twas a fearful pause! like Nature's sleep,
Ere Heav'n's red wrath across the welkin sweep.
Like his short fitful rest that fears surprise,
Grasps the drawn sword, and slumb'ring still defies.
But Treason now, in gentle guise enshrin'd,
Weaves the dark plot, and stains the noble mind.
Does Envy bid her secret venom flow
To blast the laurels wreath'd round Richard's brow?
Shall he, who triumph'd o'er the rugged soil,
Lose the rich harvest of successful toil?

Richard, thy soul was chivalry! thy spear
When couch'd in wrath, how godlike its career!
Yes! Envy sick'ning at thy soaring plume
Herself despair'd to reach, to seal thy doom
Leagu'd with the foe to check its eagle flight,
When Heav'n itself dawn'd glorious on thy sight.
The allied bands their faithless Leaders sway,
Mount their tall ships, and plough the homeward way.

'Twas Spring: war's pealing clarion Richard blew,
And many a gallant heart, with ardour true,
Answer'd the call. Again on high display'd
The holy banner stream'd: lance, bow, and blade,
Leap'd from their stern repose, and all delay
Was impious deem'd; in terrible array
Still frown'd the Franks. "Jerusalem," their cry,
Headlong they rush, and mortal might defy
With fearless confidence. The blessed prize
Now courts their grasp; their rapture rends the skies.
The Soldan trembled; furious with despair
He saw his tow'ring hopes dissolv'd in air.

That mighty Eagle, whose advent'rous plumes
He deem'd for ever clipt, again resumes
Its daring flight, with new-born thunder arm'd;
The panic spreads—thro' all her streets alarm'd,
The holy City quakes—her convoys fall—
Famine impends—'tis wild'ring terror all.
On rolls the Christian war; with aspect dread
Now rugged rocks their awful barrier spread,
As if their giant arms they fiercely rais'd
To shield that glorious gem, whose lustre blaz'd
Within their twilight gloom. The steeps in vain
Their slipp'ry summits rear. One past with pain,
Another yet succeeds, while far below
Deep chasms yawn that chill the enthusiast glow.
'Twas dismal solitude! no verdure bless'd
The shudd'ring sight; some curse yet seem'd to rest
In awful chastisement of sins of yore
Withering the blasted soil. Still more and more
The pilgrim warriors in the desert maze
Entangled toil—their furious heat decays,
And reason rules apace. Where now their guides?
Alas! they claim in vain: fell Treason rides

Aloft, and o'er them, with demoniac scream,
Flaps her exulting wings. Day's parting beam
Now sinks, and round a dubious twilight sails
Doubling each present woe. Dismay prevails
And uproar wide. What means that sudden light
Bursting from steep to steep, investing Night
With splendors not her own? strange terrors creep
Daunting the stoutest heart, and murmurs leap
From mouth to mouth indignant. "'tis the deed
"Of hellish treason: else why doom'd to bleed
"Victims to those, who in the noontide glare
"Have trembled at our wrath?" Such loud despair
In Kadesh rang, when 'gainst their sainted guide
Rebellious Israel murmur'd, and defy'd
The living God. Now fiercely thund'ring near,
Wild shouts, and clash of arms assail the ear.
O! how will Morn, when first her rosy view
Shall pierce yon deep defile, with tears bedew
The hallow'd spot! there pale extended lies
A faithful band; relentless Fate denies
That death the brave man loves; the ambush'd foes
The unconscious Wand'rers in their toils enclose,

As 'midst the sunless desert far apart,
Perplex'd they labour'd; with despairing heart,
They mark'd the o'erhanging cliffs with turbans lin'd;
Their knell is rung! impetuous as the wind,
Huge rocky fragments thunder down the steep
Whelming the mangled victims: one wide sleep
Seals ev'ry eye. Yet 'twas not hence alone
That Midnight drank the dying warrior's groan,
Where'er the Franks with fatal error stray,
The prowling Pagans intercept their prey.
The sad Survivors, thro' the length'ning night,
With keen impatience wait returning light.
O! had not fear the Soldan's step represt,
Ne'er had that light the holy champions blest.
Undying firmness flashing from his eyes,
The royal Pilgrim watch'd the dawn arise.
Round swarm the knights: they scan, with serious brow,
Their Monarch's look, his inmost soul to know.
A thousand swords are brandish'd high in air,
Hailing the sun of hope triumphant there.
Where lingers he, the eagle-crested Knight,
So wont to chide the lazy-pacing night

Impatient for the field? Day steals along,
St. Aubyn comes not! dark forebodings throng
Yon thoughtful Vet'ran's heart; well Malcoln knew
No trivial cause, when glory claim'd her due,
Could stay the eager Chief; now here, now there,
He threads the warrior ranks: few seem'd to share
His anxious fears, for none, like him, could feel
For one, from childhood lov'd, whose maiden steel
Scarce its first gory harvest sprang to reap,
Ere doom'd in orphan solitude to weep.

His was the care, nor vain the sweet employ,
That train'd to deeds of arms the grateful boy.
He smil'd to see, on Syria's battle shore,
His fearless plume midst long-tried warriors soar.
With him he watch'd a Father's parting groan,
Shar'd all his griefs, and liv'd for him alone.

Each fond idea crowding o'er his thought,
His heart's adopted child the old Man sought.
On yon o'erhanging cliff behold him stand,
Where, idly loit'ring, leans a lonely band.
On the past night so fraught with wild alarm,
Their converse runs, with deep'ning interest warm.

Hence wretched man! with light'ning speed depart,
Ere the dread tidings strike upon thy heart!
One nam'd a chief, and mourn'd his hapless lot,
O'erpow'r'd, when midnight wrapt the fatal spot,
By foes unseen, with all his vassal train—
Why drops the speaker his unfinish'd strain,
Eyeing the abrupt defiles beneath him flung,
Like mounting waves, with foam their summits hung,
Their bosoms dark and deep? 'tis he, 'tis he,
'Tis Malcolm breaking through the rugged sea!
His brain all chaos, with distraction wild
He seeks the scene of death, his slaughter'd child!
With all the fire of youth, he speeds amain;
In vain the vallies yawn, the steeps in vain
Their sides precipitous rear—but mark him now,
Slow, panting, fainting—could he reach that brow
That mocks his trembling limbs, his toils were o'er!
He lifts his feeble gaze—one effort more—
He gains, he reels, he falls! the trance is past
And recollection slowly dawns—aghast
He eyes the vale of blood; the morning beam
Now pours athwart the gloom its rosy stream,

Flashing o'er helm, and mail, and broken spear,
Wet with night's pitying tears; his shudd'ring ear
Drinks the fell vulture's scream, with horror crown'd,
Calling his fellow tribes to gather round,
And share the dreadful feast. As if opprest
With battle-toil, and bath'd in dewy rest,
Midst shatter'd rocks that chill'd the eye of day
Reeking with gore, the unconscious victims lay.
Amid the mangled heaps, with falt'ring feet
One form he sought, but almost fear'd to meet.
From many a starting eye-ball's fixed glare
That spoke life's closing pangs, its last despair,
Sick'ning he turn'd: yet o'er the ghastly vale
The well-known surcoat, and the sable mail
He sought in vain: that helm! the eagle crest,
The raven plume, whose sullied pride confess'd
Some fearful struggle! 'twas hope's parting knell!
His burning tears o'er the lone relic fell
With all a father's agony! but where
The long-lost Chief, whose lov'd remains might share
The last sad rite his cares could now bestow?
Thence, where a scanty streamlet trickled slow
From the cleft rock, faint fitful murmurs flow.

He reach'd the spot; there, stretch'd on flinty bed,
Lay the unconscious Knight! his naked head
A youth upheld, and with the cooling wave
Bath'd his pale brow, solicitous to save.
A monk, whose coarse black habit swept the ground,
Bright on its left with faith's blest ensign crown'd,
Aided the pious task: with look resign'd
He seem'd the gen'ral friend of lost mankind;
Scorning inglorious ease for ceaseless toil
To glean with Charity celestial spoil.
His deep-mouth'd scrip was fraught with needful store
To cheer the hungry, and the sick restore;
Or, if all earthly cares in vain were giv'n,
His lips prepar'd a penitent for Heav'n.
The deep-indented brow, the earthward form,
Spoke long acquaintance with life's varied storm.
"O sight of woe!" the impatient Veteran cry'd,
And sank in breathless terror by his side,
He rais'd the mailed hand—no answering joy
Met his fond clasp, or warm'd the dull cold eye.
"My brave! my beautiful! in manhood's pride
"Cut off! O would I in thy stead had died!

" How will our gallant King thy fate regret!
" The brightest star of Chivalry is set
" To rise no more!" " Weep on," the Father said,
" The tears are sacred, that embalm the dead.
" Like the soft mist, beneath whose silent tread
" Laugh the green hills, with richer verdure spread,
" Such is the joy of grief! with mild controul
" Its soothing calm illumes the darken'd soul.
" Yet, Man, arraign not the chastising rod,
" Death's gloomy gate 's the passport to our God!
" Despair not now ; if right experience prove,
" This Knight once more shall answer to thy love.
" Not far from hence, close screen'd from prying eyes
" By pathless rocks, a secret grotto lies.
" There many a wounded wretch, both friend and foe,
" For ne'er should charity distinction know,
" My cares have tended, nor with vain relief;
" There let our strength united bear the chief."
Cautious and slow the warrior they convey'd,
Unlac'd his arms, and on a pallet laid.
There while balsamic herbs the Monk apply'd,
" He lives! he lives!" the Youth transported cry'd.

" Beneath my gentle pressure heaves his brow !"
'Twas but a trance—the long suspended glow
Warms the pale cheek. In silent extacy
They hail returning life; the unclos'd eye
Beams conscious round, like heav'n's aerial bow
Fraught with mild promise to a world below.
Thro' many a live-long night, and ling'ring day
Stretch'd on his humble bed, St. Aubyn lay;
Yet still he mark'd unwearied by his side
On soundless feet a dark-ey'd stripling glide,
Who watch'd his ev'ry look with gaze intent,
His pangs to soften, and each wish prevent.
One eve, extended on the flinty ground,
Surpris'd by sleep, the exhausted youth was found.
As scann'd the pitying monk his wasted frame,
" Mirror of duteous love ! thy truth might shame
" Maturer years ! O had thy Master died,
" The desert world had ne'er his loss supplied,
" One grave had shrin'd ye both !" with deep surprise
The Vet'ran heard, and, " Father ! whence," he cries,
" This gentle Youth ? the wounded Chief inspir'd
" By gratitude, has oft in vain enquir'd

" His name, his lineage: with his earliest years
" Coeval, seems the rooted love he bears
" The wond'ring Knight, who in this cavern'd scene,
" First heard his voice, first mark'd his graceful mein.
" His tender years, his modest zeal, impart
" A spell, that finds a home in every heart.
" Methought with thee, amid this desert wild
" Bloom'd the fair flow'r, and thy lone hours beguil'd."
" Alas!" reply'd the Monk with falt'ring tone,
" All have I lost, but heav'n's dread will be done!
" No kindred now survive, one tear to shed
" When the turf closes o'er this aching head!
" Strange is this boy, his lineage, and his name,
" Yet such as Fathers might be proud to claim.
" That night when tangled in these dread defiles,
" The Christians bled, o'erwhelm'd by Pagan wiles,
" From my cell's mouth I mark'd, with shuddering eye,
" Red arrowy meteors light the darken'd sky;
" Fierce shouts, and screams terrific scar'd repose,
" Nor ceas'd my vigils, till the dawn arose.
" 'Twas then I issued forth, by duty led
" To tend the wounded, or inhume the dead.

"I reach'd the fatal glen; Death strew'd the ground,
"And all was still and motionless around.
"Slowly I pass'd amidst the unconscious slain,
"And sigh'd to think all human help was vain.
"Sudden this youth, by fitful sobs betray'd,
"Amid the slaughter I discover'd laid.
"The Chieftain's head one tender arm embrac'd,
"While his soil'd helm he eagerly unlac'd,
"That, haply playing o'er his burning brow,
"The ambient air might some relief bestow.
"Such was the hour, and such his sweet employ,
"When first I wond'ring hail'd the Stranger-boy.
"Much do I wonder, yet conjecture 's vain;
"His lips can best the mystery explain."

'Twas Eve—before the cell the Chief reclin'd,
And drank new vigour from the balmy wind.
The sun, in all its gorgeous liv'ry drest,
Now sought the golden chambers of the west.
O'er the tall steeps in groups fantastic hung,
Rich varied tints the parting splendour flung.

Save where with careless hum the wild-bee springs,
Or wheels the sportive dove in airy rings,
That o'er the hermit cell, a sacred guest,
Had fearless rear'd its solitary nest,
Rose on the charmed air no jarring sound;
'Twas heav'n's own calm, that breath'd Elysium round.
The Monk, his grey head glist'ning in the ray,
Lean'd on his staff and watch'd retiring day.
Lull'd by the pause to meditation dear,
Man to his Maker seem'd to draw more near.
All Nature hail'd the hour of genial rest,
All, save that toiling world, the human breast.

In buoyant extacy, the Stranger-boy
Bounded from cliff to cliff with clam'rous joy.
Oft paus'd to share St. Aubyn's ready smile,
Beaming approval of his active toil.
It chanc'd among the spoils, that strew'd the ground,
His search a bow, and well stor'd quiver found.
Now welcome was its use: the trembling Dove
Suspends its harmless gambols: far above

Majestic sailing, eager for its prey,
The mighty Vulture scatters wide dismay.
Near and more near it came, on vent'rous wing!
Eager he fits the arrow to the string;
Behind, his white arm glisten'd, as he drew
E'en to its utmost stretch the elastic Yew.
The fatal shaft with aim unerring flies,
The airy robber, flutters, falls, and dies.
" Speak" cry'd the Knight, as at his feet display'd
Th' exulting Youth his winged trophy laid,
" Whence, and who art thou? large the debt I owe
" For cares receiv'd, and would thy lineage know.
" O gen'rous Chief! the modest Stripling said,
" Thou liv'st, and all my cares are well repaid.
" Spurn me not from thee! to thy deadly foe,
" To one of Alla's race, my birth I owe.
" Near Nile's majestic stream my childhood grew,
" But no fond Mother's love that childhood knew.
" That hour, which gave me birth, her spirit fled
" To bow'rs of bliss, for true believers spread.
" Far, far from home, in busy camps employ'd,
" My Sire the Soldan's confidence enjoy'd.

" His martial skill, his hatred of thy race,
" Conspir'd to raise him to that envied place.
" Midst slaves, that trembled at my lawless will,
" How could my heart one gen'rous impulse feel.
" An only child, with undivided sway
" I rul'd despotic, e'en thro' childhood's day.
" Yet o'er myself I rul'd not: no kind hand
" Taught me the important task of self-command.
" Now to those days of erring guilt I turn,
" And thoughts repentant in my bosom burn.
" Beauteous our gardens bloom'd; yet there, e'en there,
" Midst Eden bow'rs, the groan of deep despair
" Rose on the scented gale! with proud disdain
" Frequent I mock'd the Christian captive's pain.
" One aged Man, distinguish'd o'er the rest
" By patient meekness, gall'd my envious breast.
" I dar'd insult him—doubled all his toil—
" Reproach had pleas'd me, but his pitying smile
" Inflam'd my jealous brain: and 'whence,' I cry'd
" ' Dost thou, poor wretch, this wond'rous calm provide?'
" ' 'Tis here! the fount is here! thrice blest his lot,
" Who tastes and lives, but thou can'st know it not.'

" Scarce twelve new moons have roll'd harmonious round,
" Since first my ear imbib'd the novel sound.
" 'Twas malice, envy of the treasur'd lore,
" Whose keenness urg'd the secret to explore.
" The simple doctrine I with scorn receiv'd,
" And mock'd the easy weakness that believ'd.
" But soon derision ceas'd—attention grew,
" And a new heav'n dawn'd beauteous on my view.
" Greedy I drank of Truth's immortal wave,
" And all my world was now the Christian slave.
" He died! with anguish'd heart I wept his end:
" Methought the earth enshrin'd my only friend!
" When carnage rag'd round Joppa's trembling wall,
" With orphan tears I wept my Father's fall;
" I seem'd a stranger in my native bow'rs,
" And restless longings sadden'd all my hours.
" My sage Instructor was no longer near,
" And all around wore dark mistrust and fear.
" O should I dare, unfriended and alone,
" The wild'ring terrors of a world unknown,
ere shall I turn amid that world to meet
voice of welcome that will kindly greet?

" At midnight's silent hour, wealth, kindred, home,
" All I forsook, with pilgrim feet to roam.
" No terrors daunted, no fatigue dismay'd,
" For round me hover'd my Instructor's shade.
" 'Twas more than chance, that to this vale of blood
" Led my lone steps, where first thy face I view'd.
" ' O could my cares,' I sigh'd, ' this Knight relieve,
" His arms the youthful wand'rer would receive.'
" And wilt thou spurn me from thee ? bid this heart,
" Leap at the sound, ' We never more shall part.'
" Thy faithful page for ever let me live :
" Nought, but a grateful heart, can Selim give."
Such was the tale, whose moving sorrows stole
With spell resistless o'er St. Aubyn's soul.
His soothing voice the anxious pleader cheers,
And lulls to rest his visionary fears.
As Selim sobs his thanks, and clasps his knees,
A distant trump swells faintly on the breeze.
" Hear'st thou, good Malcolm ?" cry'd the kindling Chief,
" Hear'st thou that sound of mingled joy and grief ?
" Haste thee ! I mark impatience in thine eye—
" Think not of me—health's wish'd return is nigh.

" Soon will this arm with wonted vigour bloom,
" And its proud station in the war resume."
" But where," he sigh'd, opprest with sudden grief,
" That vassal band, that hail'd me for their chief?
" Late like the mighty oak, I tower'd on high;
" Now naked, shiv'ring, in the dust I lie.
" O who shall tell the tale?" the scenes of home
Rush o'er his thoughts, involv'd in deepest gloom.
He heard the bursting groans tumultuous swell,
As o'er each cot that tale, like thunder, fell!
He envied those who slept on glory's bed,
Nor reck'd the tears by fond affection shed.

At dawn, the thoughtful warrior winding slow
And frequent pausing, gain'd the beetling brow
Shelt'ring the humble cell, while at his side
The gentle Selim all his strength supply'd.
Is it some mighty host, whose length'ning pride
Along the horizon pours its silver tide?
Now hid by rocks, and now emerging slow,
Men, steeds, and lances on the summits glow.

Fir'd at the sight, involuntary pray'r
Bursts from his lips! his hands are rais'd in air!
His boundless rapture all controul defies,
Streams o'er his cheek, and lightens in his eyes.
" 'Tis won! the triumph of our Faith is o'er,
" And insult wounds the tomb of Christ no more.
" Thrice happy ye, who round that tomb have knelt;
" O may I live to feel what ye have felt."

While the sweet hope his beaming brow array'd,
A Knight, whose helm the crested swan display'd,
Urg'd swift his milk-white steed: their greetings o'er
" 'Tis past," De Clifford sigh'd, " this fatal shore
" Laughs at our efforts—still in valour's spite
" Disasters crowd—our hopes are quench'd in night."
St. Aubyn heard—the sudden strain of woe
Smote to his heart, and chill'd its hallow'd glow.
" Lives Richard yet?" escap'd his falt'ring tongue;
" He lives: his gen'rous heart with anguish wrung.
" Still the proud crescent flames o'er Sion's steep,
" Mocks our vain dream, and bids the stoutest weep.
" To shame, to rage a prey, our scatter'd Host
" Hurry in wild disorder to the coast.

" How chang'd the scene, since shouts of rapt'rous joy
" Peal'd the dread vow of death or victory!
" Blindly we rush'd, our wants but ill supply'd;
" Secure that conquest would excess provide.
" Nor burning sands could check our firm career,
" Nor thirst, nor famine, wake one throb of fear.
" Fierce on our march the hostile legions press'd,
" Thinn'd our close ranks, nor gave one moment's rest.
" We deem'd the intervening perils past,
" Deem'd Sion won, but hope was wreck'd at last.
" Long in our ranks had lurk'd the secret foe,
" That aim'd, and aim'd too true the deadly blow.
" 'Twas hate, 'twas envy of our Sovereign's fame
" That in our Ally lull'd the stings of shame,
" And marr'd each bold design. Our plans betray'd,
" Our councils crost, or with slow step obey'd,
" E'en Richard felt despair. O well he knew
" His English free from taint, but all too few
" For conquest. Oft thro' nightly wilds we pass'd,
" Anxious to outstrip the foe, nor idly waste
" Our strength in useless strife, our only care
" On Sion bent: in vain! the deep-laid snare,
" The poison'd well, the obstructed path declare

" That foe forewarn'd; impatient of controul
" Burst discord forth. Our King, with bleeding soul,
" Conven'd the Chiefs, and, 'swear my friends!' he cry'd,
" 'Swear on this cross, how weak all oaths beside!
" That nought, till yon blest City yield, shall part
" The Christian pow'rs:' All swore, with willing heart,
" Save Burgundy—He from the mystic sign
" Turn'd quick: sudden his troops, in lengthen'd line,
" Move from their post—confest the traitor stood!
" The mutter'd curse, the indignant cry, pursu'd
" Their flight. Around our King we duteous pour,
" Thus foully wrong'd but yet endear'd the more.
" 'Well let them go,' he cry'd, 'if God so will,
" We are enow his purpose to fulfill.'
" God will'd it not! within his tent apart
" I mark'd the secret strife that rent his heart.
" How could his cares avert, his might withstand
" The thousand woes, that hemm'd his little band?
" Not these alone oppress'd—e'en England's throne
" The trait'rous John already mark'd his own.
" At morn, a night of sleepless struggles o'er,
" A Pilgrim's staff the royal Mourner bore.

" Barefoot, in lowly weed, with head expos'd,
" He thus the purpose of his soul disclos'd:
" 'De Clifford, hear! we must not rashly waste
" Our Subjects' blood—yet, ere the word be past
" That bids us Earth's most glorious prize forego,
" Lead, where thy humbled King, from yon tall brow,
" May gaze on Sion's steep his last farewell.'
" We reach the height. Description faints to tell
" The glorious vision. In the distant sky
" Imperial Salem met the ravish'd eye,
" In pomp of Spires, of Palaces, of Tow'rs,
" Thron'd like a Queen! 'O well may earthly pow'rs
" Strive for a gem like this! how doubly blest
" He, who from Pagan pride thy shrines shall wrest!
" Such was my hope—not such my envied lot;
" I am not worthy deem'd!" all else forgot,
" Low on his knee the royal Pilgrim fell,
" And bow'd his head, and wept!"

O who can tell
St. Aubyn's awe-struck soul! With keen despair
He mourn'd his tow'ring hopes dissolv'd in air.

" O erring Man!" the holy Father said,
" At morn, how proud! at eve, the grave his bed!
" His daring hand would grasp the rod of fate,
" His plans presumptuous mock his mortal date
" Gone like a dream of night! Man madly wills
" Without his God, but God alone fulfills.
" Angels must weep to view the slaughter'd host,
" The uncoffin'd bones, that whiten all the coast.
" Successive streams still swell the crimson flood,
" And all the land is drunk with Christian blood.
" At God's dread fiat, not a Pagan foot
" Shall with unhallow'd touch these scenes pollute.
" But like a shadow o'er the sunny mead,
" Their swarms shall melt, and heav'n's own race succeed.
" Father of mercy! haste that season's birth,
" When one rich zone of love shall bind the earth."

Meanwhile o'er all the region scatter'd wide,
The baffled Christians pour in humbled pride.
Here many a brow with sullen gloom was spread,
And deep despondence bow'd the drooping head.

There cold indifference careless pass'd along,
Pour'd the loud laugh, or humm'd the vacant song.
These mourn their blasted hopes, their foul disgrace,
E'en when success seem'd courting their embrace;
Those, tir'd of War, their fainting bosoms cheer
With thoughts of home, in absence doubly dear.
"Selim," St. Aubyn said, as sinking slow
The war receding shed a fainter glow,
"'Tis Heav'ns high will, our late exulting host
"Treads back its steps inglorious to the coast.
"Bethink thee, Selim! can'st thou vent'rous brave
"Scenes far away, across the stormy wave?"
"Where'er thy travel, from thy honor'd side
"Nor toil, nor peril, shall thy Page divide.
"E'en should'st thou spurn me, with devotion true
"Still would I linger, and thy path pursue!
"Where shall the orphan youth for shelter flee?
"He has no friend in this wide world but thee."
"Cheer thee, my child, nor thus disorder'd kneel;
"Think not, I hear unmov'd thy fond appeal.
"Ill should I honor him, whose cross I bear,
"To cast thee friendless forth—yes! thou shalt share

" With me those joys our English homes impart;"
The enraptured Selim heard—his grateful heart
Shone thro' his tears, as when an April beam
Darts thro' the falling mist a broken gleam.

" Seest thou, my gentle boy! where falt'ring slow,
" The holy Father winds the crags below?
" He seems with travel spent—at duty's call
" No toils dishearten, no fatigues appall."
Scarce breath'd the wish, the Youth with buoyant feet
Sprang down the steep, his aged friend to meet,
Whose ready smile the welcome aid confess'd,
Whose grateful lips the attentive stripling bless'd.
Fraught with each charm to innocence allied
He seem'd, like May at hoary Winter's side.

The Chief, beneath a rock's projecting shade,
Watch'd his sweet cares, and with delight survey'd.
Ne'er breath'd his fairy form a richer grace;
His artless soul illum'd his upturn'd face.
" How hadst thou droop'd, frail flow'r, expos'd to bear
" Life's freezing blasts, its desolate despair!
" Methinks, nor would I the fond thought forego,
" 'Tis Heav'n that snatched thee from severer woe

"To claim a refuge here!—thy orphan need
"Be mine to soothe, and Heav'n will bless the deed."

As rapt in thought, the lonely Chieftain lies,
The landscape fades before his swimming eyes.
Oblivious dews along his temples creep,
And all his senses yield, surpris'd by sleep.
Well may the dreamer smile! around his head
Visions of home their soothing influence shed.
Slow o'er the wave rise Eden's beauteous tow'rs!
Matilda welcomes to his native bow'rs!
Her voice, like softest music, thrills his frame;
It breathes assent, and owns a mutual flame.
Wake, thou that sleepest, ere the life blood part!
Wake, ere the lifted weapon reach thy heart!
The base assassin steals on tiptoe tread,
And still thou smil'st and sleepest! o'er thy head
Glitters the blade; O who shall save thee now?
No arm, but Heav'n's, can intercept the blow!
Heav'n gave the word—the shaft of vengeance flies;
The baffled Murd'rer staggers, falls, and dies.

Rous'd at the din, the Knight, with wilder'd stare,
Leaps from the ground—some wretch lies lifeless there!
Deep in his forehead fix'd, the arrow stood,
And o'er his features cours'd the bubbling blood.
Now Selim sprang to view, with bow unstrung,
And round his knees in wild disorder clung.
Slow on the stripling's track the Monk appears:
"My son! my son! 'tis joy that prompts these tears:
"'Twas he, 'twas Selim stay'd the stroke of fate!
"One moment more, his shaft had flown too late.
"Scarce had we gain'd the brow where rapt in sleep
"Thou late wert laid behind the shadowy steep,
"Sudden some Form mysterious, gliding slow!
"We mark'd th' uplifted arm, the threaten'd blow!
"Swifter than thought, the stripling's bow was strung,
"And thro' the air the vengeful arrow sung.
"Behold it here!" St. Aubyn shudd'ring heard,
Gazed upwards, and to Heav'n a prayer preferr'd
Of silent gratitude:—the blooming boy
Next shar'd his thankful heart; opprest with joy
And praise from him he lov'd, the Chief's embrace
He sprang to meet, and hid his blushing face.

Now turn'd that Chief, yet trembling turn'd aside,
To view the guilty dead—" Just Heav'n" he cried
When past his close survey, " I fear'd to know
" Some trace familiar, but this bitter blow
" Thy mercy spares—what pow'rful cause of strife
" Has arm'd a stranger hand to seek my life?"
" How eloquent is death!" the Father sigh'd,
" It speaks in thunder to the heart of Pride!
" Here let the Christian bend, with serious brow,
" And glean a moral from the dust below!
" In all the daring insolence of Sin,
" E'en while he brav'd his God, life's closing scene
" Dropt on his crimes—his spirit flew to meet
" That God, from whose fierce wrath there's no retreat!
" Be ours to mix him with his parent dust;
" 'Tis all we can! the rest to heav'n we trust.

" But far and wide, my Son, the rumour grows,
" That flush'd with triumph, our relentless foes
" Hang on the cross, whose now dishearten'd band
" Seek the strong holds, that line the sea-wash'd strand.

" O had one soul, as one blest faith, combin'd
" The jealous Franks, to all the future blind,
" Brothers in heart and arms, the well-knit pow'r
" Had fix'd the cross on Sion's captive tow'r!
" O'er them exulting discord flaps her wing;
" In vain himself a host, the Lion King
" He who ne'er paus'd to count the opposing foe
" Till his strong arm had smote their triumph low,
" Breasts the o'erwhelming tide, with aspect stern,
" That but recoils, more dreadful to return!"
" Father," exclaim'd the Chief, " ere close of day
" My route begins; thy words forbid delay."
" O long and dang'rous is the way to go,
" And prowls on ev'ry side the ambush'd foe!
" Curb thy impatient zeal, till needful rest
" Recruit thy frame, by sickness sore opprest.
" Each secret path, by use familiar made,
" Well do I know, and will thy wishes aid
" Associate of thy road:—my lonely heart
" Clings to thy love, and will reluctant part.
" With thee I feel a melancholy joy;
" Thine were the graces of my noble boy!

" Years have roll'd on, but years can ne'er erase
" The things that were, the scenes of other days!
" My child! my Julian! tho' to Heav'n's high will
" I strive submission, Nature murmurs still.
" When thou wert here, how fair my branches spread!
" But all are wither'd now, since thou art dead—
" Sweet Spring returns, the woods are rob'd in green,
" But on my blasted boughs no leaf is seen!"
Slowly he turn'd away, with alter'd look;
His aged limbs with strange emotion shook.
As watch'd the wistful Knight his parting form,
" O who shall scape," he sigh'd, " the wintry storm,
" When good men suffer, when the heart that bleeds
" For lost mankind, itself compassion needs."

END OF BOOK I.

MATILDA.

BOOK II.

CHIVALRY.

BLEST were the times, and Man supremely blest,
When spotless Honour sway'd the Knightly breast.
When o'er the night, that shadow'd all the earth,
Dawn'd a new Era of celestial birth.
Water'd by Misery's tears, whose bright'ning eye
Hail'd in the embryo plant her future joy,
Exulting mark'd its rich aspiring head
Reach to the clouds, its mighty branches spread
O'er land and sea, sprang Chivalry to light,
And pale Dishonour trembled at the sight.
Then on the earth Truth rear'd its hallow'd throne,
And Heav'n's own image there reflected shone.

Now thou afflicted one! that long hast borne
The galling chain, the Oppressor's biting scorn,
Thy hour of triumph comes; fierce, ardent, strong,
Sworn at the altar to avenge thy wrong,
Rushes the indignant Knight. O, who shall stand
The fearful stroke, when Justice nerves the hand?

Mark at that shrine, inflam'd with holy zeal,
The youthful candidate for glory kneel!
In each proud badge to Knighthood due array'd,
He girds with extacy the sacred blade.
While from the altar swells the solemn rite
That hymns the duties of a faithful Knight,
As if from heav'n the inspiring accents came
He hears, and deep devótion thrills his frame.

" Receive this weapon; like its glitt'ring blade,
" Be thy strong faith in purest light array'd.
" Faith is our legend; round the naked sword
" Circled with flame, behold the mystic word.
" Let self-defence its flashing terrors bare,
" The foes of Christ its holy vengeance share.

" When Misery sues, its ready aid extend,
" The Widow's champion, and the Orphan's friend.
" On deeds like these, not for itself alone,
" Has Knighthood rear'd its truth-encircl'd throne.
" They breathe defiance to life's thorny road,
" And draw the pilgrim nearer to his God.
" Sheathe it. O ever may it pure remain
" No act of thine its cloudless lustre stain!
" But weightier matters linger yet behind
" To rein with strictest rules the excursive mind.
" In word, in deed, be Honesty thy guide;
" Four beauteous Handmaids grace her honour'd side.
" Prudence, who scans, with oft-reverted eye,
" And borrows wisdom from the days gone by.
" She, from the truths their awful lessons yield,
" 'Gainst future ills provides the timely shield.
" Justice, who poises the eternal scale
" With even hand, whom bribes in vain assail.
" Near her stands Fortitude, with brow serene
" Thro' life's fierce struggles to its closing scene.
" Last, Temperance that sweetens all below,
" Whose pulse ne'er mounts too high, nor sinks too low.

" With these walk boldly forth! all else is vain
" Renown on earth, a heavenly crown to gain.
" Now mark these gilded Spurs, and duly heed
" Their moral lesson. As thy erring steed
" Shrinks from their warning goad, and urg'd by fear
" Pursues his cautious road, with heart sincere
" Shrink thou from vice, nor for inglorious ease
" Desert fair honour's path. Thy bended knees
" Pledge thee to heav'n; in heav'n's dread page, thy vow
" Now stands recorded. With uplifted brow
" Unaw'd by threats, go forth; and as behind
" Fix'd on the heel, this glitt'ring spur we bind,
" Fling the world from thee, and to Knighthood true,
" Place Heav'n and all its joys for ever in thy view.
" Next, in memorial of the mantle rude
" The camel skin, in desert solitude
" Worn by our patron Saint, the baptist Seer,
" This cloak I o'er thee throw. Do thou revere
" His stern example, and, like him, despise
" This nether world, its pomps, and vanities.
" Remember too, when thy career be past,
" This cloak must shroud thy cold remains at last.

" Lastly, this Cross, white as unsullied snow,
" Emblem of Him, who died for all below,
" On the left side, close neighbour to thy heart,
" Fast to thy cloak I join, nor let it part
" Thence, while thy better arm a blade can wield;
" With thy last grasp our Faith's blest ensign shield."

MATILDA.

BOOK II.

IN cloudless azure hung, the lamp of night
O'er sleeping Nature pour'd its chasten'd light.
Slow from his fev'rish rest the Father rose:
The thought of Julian sadden'd his repose.
He climbs the steep, by pious duty led,
To pay the last sad honours to the dead.
Thence all the vivid glories round him thrown,
Breathing a hallow'd calm to day unknown,
Burst to his view—Devotion bends his knee,
And all his soul is praise! to thee, to thee,

Fountain of Life! ascends the impassion'd pray'r:
Not his alone; suspended high in air
Worlds beyond worlds in boundless distance lost,
Lift the glad voice, to join the angelic host
Whose hallelujahs, round the Eternal throne,
Nor pause, nor period know. 'Tis pray'r alone
Can heal the broken heart, a refuge giv'n
By Christ himself, to win the ear of Heav'n.
When Saul's brave Son restrain'd his slaught'ring hand,
Fainting with toil he dipp'd his eager wand
In the sweet comb, and to his lips applied:
His eyes resume their fire, in quicken'd tide
Rolls ev'ry languid pulse. Refresh'd with pray'r
'Tis thus our souls their wasted strength repair,
And more elastic spring. By pray'r we gain
Access on high. 'Tis like a silver chain
Pendent from Heav'n, that draws, with blessed tie,
Man to his God. The dim corporeal eye
Feasts on the charms o'er earth's gay bosom flung,
Or counts the lamps on night's dun mantle hung.
It can no more. But Contemplation's eye
Soars on the wing of pray'r; the vaulted sky

Pierces with boundless ken, and rapt surveys
Where sheds the throne of Heav'n its cloudless blaze.

In his lone bed, by patient labour made,
The unknown dead the exhausted Father laid.
As fell a slanting beam his features o'er,
How fierce, how ghastly, was the scowl they wore!
From his clench'd hand the steel he slowly drew,
The unyielding hand seem'd fraught with life anew!
Shudd'ring he clos'd the task, and turn'd away,
Breathing a requiem o'er the unconscious clay.

"Stay!" cried a voice, "this new made house of death!
"Declare its tenant—speak! who sleeps beneath?"
Tho' stern the summons, ev'ry panting vein
Leap'd at the thrilling call. He breath'd with pain;
Some chord, that reach'd his heart, now touch'd anew,
Wakes from its slumber, and with feeling true
In unison replies. A mailed hand
Now grasps his arm; again the fierce command
Rings in his ears: a Warrior springs to sight.
He wore his beaver up—the moon's pale light

Play'd o'er his face—" Just Heav'n!" the Father cried,
" Mock me not thus! 'tis he, my boy! my pride!
" 'Tis Julian's self, that voice, that look, that form!
" E'en such was he, when to the battle-storm
" Desp'rate he rush'd! 'tis but as yesterday,
" Yet eighteen Summer suns have past away,
" And still the tear is fresh, that dew'd his clay.
" Mock me not thus!" transfix'd with awe, he stood,
And vain the Warrior's call, tho' oft renew'd.
Rous'd by the din, more drear by silence made,
St. Aubyn rush'd above, prepar'd to aid.
The Stranger ey'd him, and with furious look,
" Curs'd be the dastard's arm, whose wav'ring stroke
" Reach'd not thy heart! this grave had been thy fate,
" Had his weak hand been nerv'd with half my hate."
" Edmund, my friend!" the wond'ring Chief reply'd,
" What means thy deadly wrath, thy brow of pride?"
" Call me not friend! by yon bright orb I swear,
" I loathe thee, bid thee of the proof beware."
" Tempt me no more, O impotently brave!
" Why should I tremble, if a madman rave?

" Not fear, but pity prompts me to inquire
" Whence springs this frenzy, this insulting ire?"
" Hast thou not robb'd me of the sweetest prize,
" A Woman's heart? If truth within thee lies,
" Where is thy boasted purity, that Fame
" Trumpets so widely? 'tis from conscious shame
" That sudden start! Traitor, I know thee well;
" A form, all seeming, but a soul all hell!"
A frantic laugh, startling the drowsy night,
Breaks from his lips. He points the alter'd Knight,
Whose backward step, whose ruffled brow confess'd
The sudden storm that shook his manly breast.
Tho' deepest insult rain'd from Edmund's tongue,
One sweet idea balanc'd all the wrong.
O could he call Matilda's heart his own?
Could its wild wishes throb for him alone?
'Twas like a dream, a glimpse of op'ning heav'n
To holy saints, in midnight visions giv'n,
And ah! as short as they! Reflection came,
And waken'd Reason check'd the growing flame.
" Edmund! when wilful Man submits to sin,
" He trembles at the monitor within;

" But all is tranquil here. My soul disdains
" E'en sweet success which foul dishonour stains.
" No conscious guilt alarms ; my lab'ring ear
" Drank thy false charge, and could it tamely hear ?
" O might that heart without disguise be mine,
" Dauntless I'd claim, and but with life resign !
" It cannot be ; go undisturbed to prove
" Heav'n's choicest blessing, thy Matilda's love."
" Matilda's love ! the fierce, tumultuous flame
" That wings each pulse, and maddens all my frame,
" She wakes it not ! for her I simply feel
" The calmer transport of a Brother's zeal.
" Near Joppa's tow'rs, amid the shock of arms,
" I first beheld the fair Enslaver's charms.
" In warrior guise, I mark'd her proud career,
" And rush'd to combat with unhallow'd spear.
" Rent by the rude attack, her azure vest
" Asunder parted : the voluptuous breast,
" The beauteous tresses, whose disorder'd shade
" Hung o'er that heaving snow, her sex betray'd.
" I drank deep madd'ning draughts of wild desire,
" Till all my bosom rag'd with am'rous fire.

" Heav'n was within my grasp: the prize was mine;
" Fool that I was, so tamely to resign!
" Was it well done to sanctify the wrong,
" Fraud at thy heart, but honour on thy tongue?
" O flimsy was the veil! thy foul design
" Was to ensure that gem, whose beams divine
" Had thaw'd thy frosty heart!" He paus'd for breath,
While still his vengeful look was big with death.
" Hear, Edmund, hear, and to its home return
" Thy naked blade; soon milder thoughts will burn;
" I am no traitor, yet I own I love;
" Let not one jealous pang the avowal move!
" She, in whose envied love I deem'd thee blest,
" Whose token now clings fondly to thy crest,
" Long have I nurs'd for her a secret flame
" Untold to mortal ear. When loud-tongu'd fame
" Crush'd every hope, proclaim'd the treasure thine,
" I bow'd unmurmuring at Honour's shrine."
" O God of truth!" the shudd'ring Edmund cried,
" Where from thy searching presence shall I hide
" My damning guilt? dread sounding in my ear,
" Methinks from this fresh grave a voice I hear

" That summons me away! Witness, wrong'd Chief,
" My deep remorse, my penitence, and grief.
" I sought thy life—by jealous frenzy fir'd,
" In evil hour the assassin's aid I hir'd.
" See! from my helm the envied gift I tear,
" And may the gentle hand, that fix'd it there,
" Be join'd in Hymen's holy clasp to thine!
" For me, friends, kindred, country I resign—
" My woe or weal is here"—With headlong flight
He darted from the cliff—the fleecy light
Play'd on his lessening form; with piercing cry,
The Father rais'd his suppliant hands on high;
" Return, mysterious Youth, declare thy name!
" On this worn heart thou hast no common claim,
" Or Nature pleads in vain; suspend thy flight—
" Whence and who art thou? age has dimm'd my sight,
" My knees are weak—my falt'ring pace they mock."
'Twas lost in air—against the moonlight rock
The Father sank—O, for the eagle's wing
To reach the fugitive, to draw the sting
Of keen suspense, that wrings his tortur'd brain,
Till Reason faint beneath the o'erwhelming pain!

" Hail, holy Father! thou whilst others sleep,
" Hold'st converse with thy God; 'tis sweet to keep
" These lonely vigils, and entranc'd to read
" This glorious page of heav'n:" " Ah! little heed
" Malcolm! my rebel thoughts these works of God;
" Where heaves that narrow bed, the Warrior stood!
" Who is he? speak! O ease my doubts! e'en now
" He parted from the Chief, and rush'd below
" With maniac speed; Alas! I ask in vain—
" Thou know'st him not." " From childhood's gentle reign
" The warrior Youth I've known: De Clifford's name
" Scarce brooks a rival midst the sons of fame
" That crowd around their King. Within thy cell
" I found the Knight, as if by wizard spell
" Restor'd to proudest health—his looks reveal
" Mysterious transport, as in glitt'ring steel
" He sheathes his limbs, impatient to rejoin
" The sacred war. Of Edmund's foul design,
" O that such shame should stain De Clifford's heir!
" Free was his converse. Still that fix'd despair!
" Speak, give it utterance! Why should Edmund's name
" Convulse thee thus? Father! thy aged frame

" Shakes e'en to dissolution, and thy brow
" Death's liv'ry wears." In accents faint and low
" 'Tis past," at length he sigh'd, " tott'ring I stand
" Upon the confines of this world—My sand
" Is nearly spent—unearthly shapes o'erpow'r
" My brain, dread prelude to life's closing hour!
" Malcolm! I had a Son, an only Son,
" By wedded Woman's perjury undone!
" False to her vows, to Nature's pleadings dead,
" Her infant pledge the abandon'd Siren fled.
" For this he clung to life—Ere guilt could stain,
" 'Twas summon'd hence: alas! the insatiate main
" Whelm'd the proud bark! that such its wretched fate,
" Can twice ten years the dread belief abate?
" Like Edmund's form, his voice, his look, his mien,
" Such was my Julian—such had haply been
" That infant stem, torn from its parent tree
" To bloom in Heav'n! from life's tempestuous sea
" When shall I scape, their sainted bliss to share?
" Oft when I quit my couch of sleepless care,
" From yon blue spangled vault, their whispers low
" Breathe on my ear and soothe my gathering woe."

" Father !" the Veteran cried, " from days gone by
" Thou lift'st the oblivious veil—to memory's eye
" Visions, which long had slumber'd, rise anew
" In all their freshness. To our bounded view
" The march of Heav'n, a tangled maze appears,
" But Order crowns the whole. T'wice ten long years
" Have roll'd away, since near Dunelmia's coast
" A vessel founder'd—all, save one, were lost."
The Father spoke not, mov'd not, but his gaze
Seem'd as 'twould read his soul! 'twas dumb amaze
And expectation all! " The mingled roar
" Of winds and waves, that shook the sounding shore,
" Spar'd helpless innocence. On buoyant breast
" The heaving Surges bore a curious chest,
" And flung on Heorta's strand: before my feet
" Unharm'd it fell; within its close retreat
" Nestled an infant boy; I look'd around,
" No dearer shrine the angel Pity found,
" Than fair De Clifford's breast: to her I bore!
" The winning smiles the helpless Stranger wore,
" Spoke not in vain: with sweet compassion mov'd,
" The noble Kath'rine saw, receiv'd, and lov'd."

" Kath'rine! dread herald of disgrace and shame!
" Yet speak, whom meanest thou?" " the wedded Dame
" Of brave De Clifford. Near th' enchanting flood
" Of sacred Loire, embosom'd close with wood
" Fam'd Fontraux's Abbey stands; our English pow'r
" One summer's eve, along the winding shore
" Rear'd their white tents—within the hallow'd fane
" Bloom'd a lone flow'r among the sister train
" Of grace and charms so rare, th' unwearied theme
" Rous'd our young Lords: to reach the imprison'd gem
" They scann'd the circling walls, whose gloomy height
" Mock'd all their zeal, and wish'd the eagle's flight.
" A darker hue their nightly revels wore,
" And mutual taunts inflam'd their efforts more.
" To Kate St. Clair, the frequent wine-cup flow'd,
" And rival hate provok'd to deeds of blood.
" At length, his suit with sweetest triumph blest,
" De Clifford woo'd and won; the stranger guest
" His Father's halls receiv'd"—" 'tis she! the same!
" The murd'ress of my Son! e'en hell with shame
" Would own the adult'rous fiend! my Julian's wife!
" A Mother too! the dearest ties of life,

" All she abandon'd at the unhallow'd call
" Of wanton lust. God! before whom I fall,
" 'Twas at thy bidding rag'd that tempest wild
" Which near the unnatural Mother hurl'd her child."
The Vet'ran breathless heard: his varying brow
Now pale with awe, indignant burning now.
Well may the sudden charge suspicion move,
That wounds the tender fame of those we love.
" Malcolm! no falsehood 's mine; suspend reply;
" List the dark tale of guilt and perjury.

THE MONK'S TALE.

Three blooming Sons encreas'd my wedded joy,
Whose future welfare was my fond employ.
I mark'd each opening grace expanding glow,
Each buoyant form in manly beauty grow.
Where'er they mov'd, they drew the gen'ral gaze;
I drank entranc'd the music of their praise.
Nurs'd amid Camps, where Honour reign'd supreme,
My youth had pass'd, a visionary dream.

From a false source I sought the sov'reign good,
Religious peace I little understood.
Fool that I was, I train'd each child to sin,
Thó' fair without, yet all was dark within!
Above the common lot, I deem'd them blest,
And mock'd the doubts a Mother's fears express'd.
But pitying Heav'n, ere vengeance claim'd her own,
Tore from my clasping arms one cherish'd Son.
I could not weep—the death bell toll'd again!
Another died— distraction fir'd my brain.
I grasp'd the murd'rous knife, " O blindly brave
" Think," cried my sainted Wife, "beyond the grave
" Think, what awaits thee: O repent and live!
" These awful trials from thy God receive
" As proofs of mercy, from eternal woe
" To snatch thy soul; mine eyes on scenes below
" Ere long will close; I feel my strength decay;
" Heav'n is my hope and Death brings no dismay,"
The bloodless cheek, the eyes' unearthly gleam,
The hollow tone, dispell'd my frenzied dream.
Trembling, I turn'd away; a fiend of night
Thus cow'ring shrinks from day's too searching light.

She died—with deep remorse I wept her fate:
'Twas now I felt her loss, but felt too late.
Once proudly rich, with shame I now survey'd
The desp'rate wreck, my vain career had made.
Far from these scenes of wretchedness and crime
I sought, with alter'd heart, a distant clime.
My only Son, each fairy hope o'erthrown,
Hung at my side, in sorrow dearer grown.
Rich in his duteous love, and richer yet
In penitential tears, no vain regret
Escap'd my lips; expos'd to wordly ill,
I thought upon the dead, and all was still.

One eve, slow gliding o'er the waveless deep,
Near fair Italia's shore our course we keep.
Bright on our left proud Genoa's spires were seen,
And many a barge shot gaily o'er the scene.
As softest strains their sweet enchantment pour,
In measur'd cadence falls the dipping oar.
One barge, in which, amid the gallant show
No pomp was seen, no music heard to flow,

Wond'ring I watch'd, till Twilight's glimm'ring veil
Bedimm'd the face of things; the rising gale
Brings far-off cries, that loud and louder swell
Tumultuous—"List, 'tis he, that fiend of hell!
"The Pirate Moor! e'en now," our Mate exclaims,
"He springs on Genoa's unsuspecting Dames.
"Haste, low'r the boat! may he, who backward turns,
"Ne'er bask in Beauty's smile." Indignant burns
The list'ning crew—I mark'd but could I blame
The fire of Julian's eye? with panting frame
He leap'd into the boat! the parting oar
Reach'd not my ear! the enthusiast glow was o'er,
And pale suspense succeeds. The boiling deep
Foams at the prow, as round with ample sweep
We wear our bark, impatient to pursue
The gallant band—the bounding vessel flew,
To me it seem'd to linger; fiercer still
The uproar comes! shrill screams, the clash of steel,
The groan of death! the plunge into the wave,
Repeated oft! I call'd on Heav'n to save
In bitter agony! the signal light
Gleaming in fitful flashes thro' the night,

The crew display'd. Now all was hush'd—no sound
Save the dark heaving surge, that mutter'd round,
Rode on the breeze—as with suspended breath
I gaz'd, I listen'd, from the wave beneath
A voice pronounc'd my name! one hasty look,
I sprang into the flood—with vig'rous stroke
I reach'd, I grasp'd him, ere the insatiate tide
Clos'd o'er my Julian's head; the Crew supply'd
Their timely aid. O blind officious haste!
Had then we sunk, embracing and embrac'd,
The pelting storm, that o'er this hoary head
Beat pitiless, had never wak'd the dead!
  Stretch'd on the deck, in all the calm of death,
A Form of beauty lay. A rosy wreath
Still round her matted hair, in drooping pride,
Hung mournfully—she seem'd some envied bride,
By rival hate, hurl'd from the nuptial feast
To glut the teeming wave: the snowy vest
Braided with flow'rs, drench'd by the dripping flood
Clung round her graceful limbs. The sight subdu'd
The soften'd crew, and with unwonted sighs
Their rugged bosoms heav'd. But time denies

To paint the sad detail. All, save my boy,
O'erpower'd by numbers fell—no aid was nigh—
Shielded by pow'r unseen, desp'rate he broke
Thro' hostile blades, unhurt by mortal stroke,
And plung'd into the main. Within his arms
He bore that angel fiend, whose fatal charms
I only live to curse! I see her now
All perfect as she seem'd—the sunny brow,
The faultless shape, the eyes' celestial blue
Now beaming bright, now dimm'd with grateful dew,
The artless tongue, whose still unwearied theme
Was Julian her preserver—'tis a dream
From which I wake to madness! such a shrine
Could Julian gaze, nor woo its charms divine?
" 'Twas on some festal eve," She blushing said
While at her feet the enamour'd Youth was laid,
" When thro' fair Genoa's streets, her circling bay,
" The song, the laugh, prevail'd and all was gay,
" My Brother's barge, whose state eclips'd the rest,
" Launch'd in proud pomp on Ocean's glitt'ring breast.
" His guardian care, since both my Parents died,
" Watch'd my lone years and all their loss supplied.

" Thoughtless of danger, from the less'ning shore
" Midst vacant mirth we ply'd the vent'rous oar;
" Nor reck'd a silent bark, that seem'd to creep
" And track our course along the shadowy deep.
" It near'd us; wild the Moorish war cry rings,
" And on our deck the turban'd Robber springs!
" 'Twas havoc all! our unresisting Crew
" Chill'd into stone, in vain for mercy sue.
" The rest, or rich in wealth, or outward charms,
" Reserv'd for ransom, or for foreign arms.
" Sires, husbands, brothers, friends, the Pirate train
" Chain to the oar, and mock with coarse disdain.
" While we, with piercing cries lament our fate,
" Or our dread doom in silent horror wait.
" Sudden the shout of rescue thrill'd the ear
" With rapt'rous hope! we deem'd deliv'rance near—
" Julian, in peace thy gallant Comrades rest!
" Blest be their mem'ry, and O doubly blest
" Be thou, whose arm, in peril's darkest hour,
" Snatch'd me from foreign bonds, from brutal power!
" Where art thou now, my Brother? where are ye,
" My lov'd associates?" On her bended knee

Shudd'ring she sank, and, rapt in silent pray'r
She bow'd the patient head: her calm despair
Mov'd me to tears. Meantime, afar descried,
Fam'd Pisa's tow'r gleam'd faint o'er Arno's tide.
There steer'd, o'erspent with toil, our weaken'd Crew
To seek fresh succours, and their strength renew.
Tho' born the glitt'ring scenes of rank to share,
Tho' grac'd with charms that fear'd no rival there,
Meek as some lowly tenant of the shade,
No restless sighs escap'd the gentle Maid!
"Cease," she would say, "complain of want no more,
"I almost bless the chance that made ye poor.
"Am not I rich? 'tis now I proudly feel
"The transport wealth can give! the wounds to heal
"Of those we fondly love: 'tis thou must be
"My earthly Father, I have none but thee."
Fool that I was, I hail'd with tears of joy
The wedded vow, that bless'd my gallant boy.
To Genoa's tow'rs his beauteous bride he bore,
Ah! that our feet had shunn'd the fatal shore!
There many a Noble, whose rejected sighs
Still gall'd their selfish pride, with jealous eyes

Scann'd the strange Youth, who call'd that gem his own,
To them deny'd. To none that Youth seem'd known!
Suspicion's tongue was busy. Every look
Flash'd with disdain, 'twere cowardice to brook.
One eve, where midst the bow'rs that edg'd the bay
The City pour'd, we took our wonted way.
There fir'd by taunts, that echo'd far and wide,
We bar'd our weapons, and to strife defy'd.
Now sweet revenge insulted honour crown'd,
The proudest blood of Genoa dy'd the ground.
" O Julian," sigh'd his Wife, " appall'd I hear
" The fearful tale—destruction waits thee here,
" Thou must be gone!" " Without thee! let the foe
" Invent unheard of pangs! 'twere fiercer woe
" To part from thee—With thee to cheer my side,
" All countries are my home—the world is wide,
" I cannot leave thee here, to kneel, to plead
" In vain for mercy." " 'Tis not me they heed—
" Haste disappoint the foe— that vow redeem
" So often sworn midst Love's impassion'd dream
" To break my Brother's fetters—with thee bear
" This casket: stor'd within are gems so rare

" 'Twill smooth the pious task: O! 'twill be sweet
" When all these storms are hush'd, once more to meet."
I join'd her anxious prayer—" I yield," he cried,
" And for thy arms exchange the roaring tide."
In lone retirement, from the world apart,
The duteous Wife reliev'd her swelling heart.
There lost in grief, in misery's garb array'd,
She mus'd on him, by absence dearer made.
When first we met, I flew to soothe, to cheer;
Her vest no sorrow shew'd, her cheek no tear:
I paus'd confounded, when with taunting tone,
" What dost thou here? hence to thy banish'd Son
" I know thee not!" abrupt she turn'd away;
Suppliant I call'd, implor'd one moment's stay,
She spurn'd my abject suit. With frenzy wild
I deem'd the whole a dream; " my Child, my Child,
" O who shall tell thee this?" with desp'rate feet
I rush'd unconscious thro' the crowded street—
There tost from tongue to tongue, my Julian's name
Froze me to earth—'twas link'd with guilt, with shame!
The State, with murd'rous zeal, had pric'd his head—
Proclaim'd him Robber—from its vengeance fled

With rarest gems—describ'd with nicest care
His outward form! infuriate with despair
I sought the assembled Council, face to face
Challeng'd the secret wretch, that dar'd disgrace
My guiltless boy. " Without one throb of fear
" Here had he stood, his injur'd fame to clear,
" Had not his Wife, with tears of anxious love,
" Constrain'd him hence; 'tis she, that best can prove
" If falsehood stain my lips. By heav'n I swear,
" Whose bliss the perjur'd soul can never share,
" 'Twas from her hands the parting Youth receiv'd
" Those fatal gems—nor threats, nor force, bereav'd!
" Unask'd she gave, from slav'ry to release
" A captive Brother." " Hoary traitor, peace!"
Exclaim'd a voice, " 'tis rankest perjury
" That stuns our ears. Thy Son, if such he be,
" Is charg'd with crimes, hemm'd round with proofs
" so clear,
" 'Twere mockery to doubt. To blast thy ear,
" And wither thee to silence, know, 'tis she
" Whom thy foul tongue has link'd with infamy,

" And styl'd an Outlaw's bride, that moves the State,
" Whose stroke is lightning and whose frown is fate,
" To aid her just revenge." " My Lords!" I cried,
" Could ought of levity your councils guide,
" Your words were mockery! not Genoa's walls
" Shrine one, whose sullied honour more appalls.
" My Child is innocent." " Proud boaster, hence!
" Think'st thou, our wrath is wordy impotence?
" Hence, quit our City—ere the morning light,
" Be far away, nor deem this warning slight."
Here was no mercy; round the vengeful board
The Sires of those, whose blood had stain'd our sword,
Smil'd ghastly. I disdain'd to use appeal,
Where nought but insult would requite my zeal,
And rush'd indignant forth, by force or pray'r
From the foul Trait'ress resolute to tear
The shameless mask. Where fenc'd with orange bow'rs
Her bosom'd palace stood, of happiest hours
So late the scene, a voice arrests my feet—
" Turn, wretched Man, O shun that ill-starr'd seat!"
'Twas Jasper's voice, whom Julian's gentle care
Had snatch'd from wretchedness, the joy to share

Of easy servitude. "Good Jasper, speak!"
"But where begin? She, whom thou com'st to seek,
"Is fled! thou art deluded, lost, betray'd!
"O that a form, in angel charms array'd,
"Should shrine a Demon's malice! scarce the day
"Is two hours older, since this bow'ry way
"She pac'd abrupt. It chanc'd beneath a screen
"Of spreading leaves I lurk'd, by eye unseen.
"'Yes, dear St. Clair! I yield, I yield,' she cry'd.
(That artful Maid ne'er parted from her side,)
"The spell is o'er! no hope remains but flight
"To hide that shame, which soon must meet the light.
"O may the wretch a Moorish dungeon share,
"There end at once his life and my despair!
"Our noble line thus link'd with birth unknown!
"The imperious Upstart well might all disown.
"A wife! a Mother! list, 'tis he! 'tis he!
"That call—it heralds peace and liberty.
"Sisters in love, in name, one heart, one hand,
"Far from these bow'rs, we'll seek thy native strand."
"Down the steep path that open'd on the shore
"A Stranger led. I heard, I saw no more."

" Unnatural fiend!" I cried, " hide where thou wilt,
" Thou canst not shroud from heav'n thy daring guilt!
" Thro' the wide world I'll hang upon thy flight.
" What if thy barb'rous hate, with hellish spite,
" Pursue thy babe! but she, that strange St. Clair,
" Whence comes she?" " Oft I've heard her boast, how fair
" The fields of France!" " Good Jasper, well I know
" Thou lov'st my Julian: when this crowning blow
" Shall reach his blasted ear, with patient zeal,
" Watch at his side, for thou hast learn'd to feel."
I reach'd the shore: I search'd, inquir'd around,
But no relief my burning questions found.
It chanc'd a vessel from the crowded quay
To fam'd Massilia's port pursu'd its way.
I sprang on board. O! with what restless haste
I told the hours, till o'er the wat'ry waste
Emerg'd its glitt'ring spires. I leap'd on shore,
Yet whither turn! a World seem'd spread before,
And none, save Heav'n, to guide: the guilty pair
Twelve ling'ring moons I sought, and black despair

Clos'd round me fast. One eve, o'erspent with toil
I reach'd the murm'ring Seine. Day's parting smile
On a lone abbey slept, where never sued
Distress in vain. Its sacred calm renew'd
My wasted strength: again with restless feet
I grasp'd my pilgrim staff, and turn'd to greet
The ancient Abbot. "Thank not me," he cried,
"Methinks some silent grief thou fain would'st hide,
"Consumes thy frame—I would not probe its wound
"With curious hand." Such sainted goodness crown'd
This soothing speech, I bar'd my inmost heart.
He heard—"resign thy staff: not yet we part;
"Haste to the proof that Joy's propitious gale
"May yet be thine." Scarce could I trust the tale
From holy lips. We cross'd the cloister'd court
And reach'd a lonely pile, the glad resort
Of stranger sick. "Wake, thou forlorn one, wake!
"He comes, whose voice can sweet forgiveness speak
"And calm thy guilty fears." As rapt I view'd
A haggard wretch that slept on pallet rude,
Sudden she woke. She knew, she breath'd my name,
She grasp'd my arm, "Methought, but 'twas a dream,

" And styl'd an Outlaw's bride, that moves the State,
" Whose stroke is lightning and whose frown is fate,
" To aid her just revenge." " My Lords!" I cried,
" Could ought of levity your councils guide,
" Your words were mockery! not Genoa's walls
" Shrine one, whose sullied honour more appalls.
" My Child is innocent." " Proud boaster, hence!
" Think'st thou, our wrath is wordy impotence?
" Hence, quit our City—ere the morning light,
" Be far away, nor deem this warning slight."
Here was no mercy; round the vengeful board
The Sires of those, whose blood had stain'd our sword,
Smil'd ghastly. I disdain'd to use appeal,
Where nought but insult would requite my zeal,
And rush'd indignant forth, by force or pray'r
From the foul Trait'ress resolute to tear
The shameless mask. Where fenc'd with orange bow'rs
Her bosom'd palace stood, of happiest hours
So late the scene, a voice arrests my feet—
" Turn, wretched Man, O shun that ill-starr'd seat!"
'Twas Jasper's voice, whom Julian's gentle care
Had snatch'd from wretchedness, the joy to share

Of easy servitude. "Good Jasper, speak!"
"But where begin? She, whom thou com'st to seek,
"Is fled! thou art deluded, lost, betray'd!
"O that a form, in angel charms array'd,
"Should shrine a Demon's malice! scarce the day
"Is two hours older, since this bow'ry way
"She pac'd abrupt. It chanc'd beneath a screen
"Of spreading leaves I lurk'd, by eye unseen.
"'Yes, dear St. Clair! I yield, I yield,' she cry'd.
(That artful Maid ne'er parted from her side,)
"The spell is o'er! no hope remains but flight
"To hide that shame, which soon must meet the light.
"O may the wretch a Moorish dungeon share,
"There end at once his life and my despair!
"Our noble line thus link'd with birth unknown!
"The imperious Upstart well might all disown.
"A wife! a Mother! list, 'tis he! 'tis he!
"That call—it heralds peace and liberty.
"Sisters in love, in name, one heart, one hand,
"Far from these bow'rs, we'll seek thy native strand."
"Down the steep path that open'd on the shore
"A Stranger led. I heard, I saw no more."

" Unnatural fiend!" I cried, " hide where thou wilt,
" Thou canst not shroud from heav'n thy daring guilt!
" Thro' the wide world I'll hang upon thy flight.
" What if thy barb'rous hate, with hellish spite,
" Pursue thy babe! but she, that strange St. Clair,
" Whence comes she?" " Oft I've heard her boast, how fair
" The fields of France!" " Good Jasper, well I know
" Thou lov'st my Julian: when this crowning blow
" Shall reach his blasted ear, with patient zeal,
" Watch at his side, for thou hast learn'd to feel."
I reach'd the shore: I search'd, inquir'd around,
But no relief my burning questions found.
It chanc'd a vessel from the crowded quay
To fam'd Massilia's port pursu'd its way.
I sprang on board. O! with what restless haste
I told the hours, till o'er the wat'ry waste
Emerg'd its glitt'ring spires. I leap'd on shore,
Yet whither turn! a World seem'd spread before,
And none, save Heav'n, to guide: the guilty pair
Twelve ling'ring moons I sought, and black despair

Clos'd round me fast. One eve, o'erspent with toil
I reach'd the murm'ring Seine. Day's parting smile
On a lone abbey slept, where never sued
Distress in vain. Its sacred calm renew'd
My wasted strength: again with restless feet
I grasp'd my pilgrim staff, and turn'd to greet
The ancient Abbot. "Thank not me," he cried,
"Methinks some silent grief thou fain would'st hide,
"Consumes thy frame—I would not probe its wound
"With curious hand." Such sainted goodness crown'd
This soothing speech, I bar'd my inmost heart.
He heard—"resign thy staff: not yet we part;
"Haste to the proof that Joy's propitious gale
"May yet be thine." Scarce could I trust the tale
From holy lips. We cross'd the cloister'd court
And reach'd a lonely pile, the glad resort
Of stranger sick. "Wake, thou forlorn one, wake!
"He comes, whose voice can sweet forgiveness speak
"And calm thy guilty fears." As rapt I view'd
A haggard wretch that slept on pallet rude,
Sudden she woke. She knew, she breath'd my name,
She grasp'd my arm, "Methought, but 'twas a dream,

" Some Angel talk'd of peace! forgive! forgive!
" Save me from yawning hell and bid me live!"
Live and be happy—if forgiveness rest
With me, 'tis freely thine. Yet why address
To me, thy dread appeal? " Hast thou forgot
" Fair Arno's banks, where stood the lowly cot
" That shelter'd thee and thine? I knew not shame
" Till She, thy Julian's bride, that high-born dame,
" Lur'd me away: deaf to its helpless cry,
" Yes she, e'en she, fled from her infant boy!"
" Bertha, that child! say that it lives, and thine
" Shall Julian's blessing be." " Thy fears resign.
" It lives—this holy Man thy steps will guide
" Where stranger hands those tender cares provide
" A Mother best could give." In one short hour
I clasp'd my Julian's child: poor lonely flow'r!
A cheerless hut, a solitary glen
Shrouded its budding charms. Again, again,
I strain'd it to my heart: a cherub smile
Play'd round its mouth, as if with conscious wile
It claim'd my love. " Hence to more genial skies
" My child! I'll bear thee, where a Father's eyes

" A Father's arms shall shield thy op'ning bloom!"
Presumptuous boast! 'twas Heav'n pronounc'd the doom
" They ne'er should meet!" but all was sunshine near:
The enchantress Hope sang sweetly in my ear:
I reck'd not future woe. With health renew'd
And her wild fears by dawning peace subdu'd,
" O could I see thy Son, and at his feet
" Yield my lov'd Charge, he would not harshly greet!"
I shar'd her wish. The Abbot's care supply'd
Whate'er might cheer our toil, or safely guide.

Oft 'mid our path, as she the child caress'd,
Would Bertha's artless sorrow thrill my breast;
" Sweet Babe! what tho' no mother's arms enfold,
" Smile ever thus! O may nor threats nor gold
" Lure thee from Virtue's arms, like me to fall
" From innocence and peace! to bow'r and hall
" Lost Mother! flee; of Pleasure's fount drink deep!
" To wake to keen reality, and weep
" Tears of remorse, thy bitter lot will prove.
" Turn here, behold thy babe! its smile of love

" Its little arms, so fondly round thee thrown,
" Will bathe thy soul in bliss, to guilt unknown.
" Woe to thy tortur'd heart, at that dread hour
" When things of this world lose their wonted pow'r!
" Turn ere too late—with me the transports share
" When Mercy soothes the cry of pale despair."

We reach Avranche; There, anchor'd in the bay,
Destin'd for Genoa's port, a Vessel lay.
We haste on board: if chang'd the adverse gale,
At dawn the Crew would hoist the parting sail.
There my lov'd Charge constrain'd awhile to leave,
Back to the shore I sped. Grim lower'd the Eve
With rising gusts, and o'er the heaving deep
Black Horror rode. Crowning a ridgy steep
An Abbey peer'd, high tow'ring o'er the shore;
There greetings from our holy Friend I bore
Entrusted to my care. As slow I wound
The dizzy height, a hollow mutt'ring sound
Swell'd from its cavern'd side: with clam'rous din
The sea bird screams, and o'er the shadowy scene

The Tempest drives: fierce rag'd the flood beneath,
I thought upon the bark—the chill of death
Smote to my heart! My promis'd duty o'er,
I hurried down the steep—I reach'd the shore
Transfix'd with awe! I call'd on Heav'n to save
My drowning child! the shout of wind and wave
O'erpow'r'd my frantic cries. On ev'ry side
The natural barriers fail'd—the bursting tide
Swept o'er the trembling earth—'twas thickest gloom
Doubling each terror—from impending doom,
Where yet the lordly Abbey brav'd the deep,
Rush'd many a Wretch, like me, to rave and weep
The livelong night. Faint dawn'd the struggling day
Blasting the sight with scenes of dread dismay.
Through the dense Crowd, that shudd'ring gaz'd below,
How various the discourse, yet all of woe!
" Cheer thee," a voice exclaim'd, " the Pilot's pow'r
" And wondrous skill, in many a stormy hour
" Have long been prov'd—his calm prophetic eye
" When lower'd portentous round the black'ning sky,
" Scann'd the wild Heav'ns—e'en while the ev'ning flood
" Scarce heav'd, as if by pirate foe pursu'd

" With hoisted sail, he clear'd the dang'rous bay,
" And gain'd the expanded main. Now far away
" Haply in Northern port his land-lock'd sail
" Securely rides, and laughs the increasing gale."
Breathless I heard; tho' faint the glimm'ring ray,
Like Hope's sweet lamp round my benighted way,
I hail'd the cheering light. Unheeded roll'd
The elemental war; with firmer hold
I grasp'd my staff, and mid the mingled roar
Turn'd northwards. Desolation strew'd the shore
With awful wreck. An undefined fear
Thrill'd ev'ry heart, and oft the shudd'ring ear
Drank shouts aerial, to a wretched race
Proclaiming judgment. Scarce one moment's space
For three long days the mighty Tempest slept,
Yet still my patient course I fearless kept.
Bay, creek, where'er a shatter'd fragment lay,
Trembling I search'd, and thankful turn'd away.
All eye, all tongue, I search'd, enquir'd in vain,
Now buoy'd with hope, now wrung with fiercest pain.
To Albion's cliffs, I cross'd the treach'rous flood,
And there from port to port my search renew'd.

At length, beneath accumulated toil
I sank, a Stranger in a foreign soil.
" I will return and seek the lonely grave
" Where Agnes sleeps near Rhone's regretted wave,
" There rest in peace." A supernatural Pow'r
Nerv'd ev'ry pulse: through many a ling'ring hour
Supported, cheer'd, till, scarce akin to life,
I dropt upon the turf that shrin'd my wife.
I died not yet: ere Fate could seize its prey,
A shout of " Father," call'd me back to day.
Before my fainting sight, with wild embrace
Swam a pale Form, whose tears bedew'd my face.
'Twas he, 'twas Julian! lost in speechless joy,
I grasp'd, 'twas all I could, my long lost boy.
" Father, I fear to ask! that spectre form!
" But good or ill betide, each future storm
" We 'll brave together." Julian at my side,
I breath'd anew, and Fate's worst frown defy'd.
My lengthen'd toil, my pilgrimage of woe
By fits I told. Stunn'd by the mighty blow
He wept not, sigh'd not: in his tearless eye
Sat calm despair. " Yet have I cause for joy!

" Thee, Father, thee, when hope within me died,
" Once more I greet. We'll wander side by side
" Cheering each other, till our arms regain
" The gentle babe—Wealth, honours, all are vain,
" If he partake not. Oft the lagging gale
" I chid impatient, as with homeward sail
" We steer'd from Afric's coast. A blissful dream
" As Genoa's spires rose glitt'ring o'er the stream,
" Wrapt ev'ry sense, and e'en the gloomy past
" O'er present joys a keener relish cast.
" Visions of hope! where are ye? but away
" The unmanly tear! Be mine, without dismay,
" To face these scowling Nobles, to demand
" My rights, and force the haughtiest of their band
" To own me, as an equal! We 're not now
" The poor, the friendless, that with downcast brow
" Slink thro' the world!
From all I valu'd most
" Constrain'd, tho' loth, to part, to Afric's coast
" I sped, unconscious of the hallow'd freight
" The Vessel bore. It chanc'd, as ling'ring late

" Sad on the moonlight deck I mus'd alone,
" A Monk drew near: his cowl was backward thrown,
" And o'er his bloodless cheek, his silv'ry brow,
" Stream'd the wan ray: his gloomy mantle's flow
" Fell to his feet. I mark'd upon his side
" The sacred badge, and never Zeal supply'd
" A holier Servant. He whose godlike fame
" Rings thro' the admiring West, whose mighty name
" Eclipses earthly Kings, before me stood
" St. Barnard! rapt in silent awe, I view'd
" Religion's bulwark: in their blest career
" E'en Angels might have paus'd, that tongue to hear
" That pleaded Sion's cause. My eager soul
" Sprang to my lips, impatient of controul,
" As at the thrilling call, I kneeling swore
" To join the hallow'd band. He heard, he tore
" This from his side, and fix'd it proudly here,
" Memento of the oath. With patient ear
" He drank my tale, and, ' well I know,' he cry'd,
" ' The valiant Count; a better ne'er defy'd
" The foes of Christ, and ill the times can spare
" His lengthen'd durance now: be mine to share

" And speed thy duteous task.' With such a guide
" Success was in my grasp. Soon o'er the tide
" The Pirate-City rose. We land, nor vain
" Our search, for bribes, what cannot gold attain ?
" Op'd the lone vault, within whose noisome damp
" Colonna lay. Scarce could the fitful lamp
" Pierce the thick gloom. ' Com'st thou,' he feebly said,
" ' Thou Man of God, by blest example led,
" To soothe my parting hour ?' ' I come to free,
" To rouse thee to the fight—'tis such as thee
" The Cross demands !' ' Such as I was, but now
" This arm is powerless, and this pale brow
" Would faint beneath a casque ; my dying pray'r
" Is all I can.' I bless'd the Father's care,
" Who, long with woe familiar, ne'er rely'd
" On chance to crown his toil : his scrip supply'd
" Invigorating aid, and from his tongue
" Dropt sounds might change to Hope's inspiring song
" The ravings of Despair. ' One earthly claim,
" Father, clings round me ! thou hast heard me name
" A Sister ; who, when this fond heart is cold,
" Shall shield the orphan Maid ?' 'Here, here, behold

" Her Husband! He deserves the hallow'd trust
" Who from these hellish bonds, from Moorish lust,
" Snatch'd the devoted victim!" Trembling, pale,
" I scarcely breath'd, while, ling'ring o'er the tale,
" The question'd Monk with flatt'ring strain pourtray'd
" Your grateful Son. He ceas'd; one word repaid
" My keen suspense. 'Brother!' with outstretch'd arm
" My noble Kinsman cried; to vain alarm
" The rapt'rous tear, the free unbosom'd heart,
" Succeeded, while his own blest work apart
" The Father gaz'd entranc'd. 'Yet, yet, I die,'
" Faint sigh'd the Count, 'this wild excess of joy
" Enfeebles more. My Brother! one short year
" Spare from connubial love. O would'st thou swear
" To aid the sinking Cross.' I bar'd my vest—
" Behold, I warmly cried, let this attest
" My Truth! this godlike Monk has rous'd the flame
" Of holy vengeance; never dying shame
" Be mine, if Traitor to my vow I prove!
" 'Tis register'd on high; not wedded love,
" Not e'en thy Sister's charms shall long detain
" From Syria's groaning fields. 'O rise again

" Such as thou wert! haply my young career
" May not inglorious prove, if thou be near.'
" A short-liv'd splendour lighten'd in his look,
" As from my lips my Soul impetuous broke.
" ' Brave Youth! I hear thee, and my peace regain;
" Those hideous phantoms, that beset my brain,
" Are fled; a Sister's fate no more alarms,
" Secure from ill, in Honour's shelt'ring arms.
" Whate'er I boast, and vast the worldly store,
" And priz'd o'er all, this Sword, which never wore
" One dark'ning stain, all, all, are thine! e'en now
" This hand shall seal the deed, and Father! thou
" Witness the rich bequest; but O! prepare
" Ere death surprize;' 'twas done; a fervent pray'r
" Escap'd him, ' Yet one worldly wish—the rest
" Be wholly heav'n's, and be this wish addrest
" Father! to Genoa's Senate; large the claim
" For blood and treasure spent to swell their fame;
" Bid their grave voice my youthful Kinsman grace
" With the proud titles of Colonna's race.
" Father!' he gasp'd for breath; I knelt beside,
" And in these arms the holy Warrior dy'd.

" With fruitless tears, and ne'er were purer shed,
" I mourn'd my friend, my benefactor dead:
" ' Peace to his soul! and who,' the Father sigh'd,
" ' Shall doubt that peace? with Honour at his side
" He walk'd his earthly course: tho' short the race
" It set in glory—Yet a little space,
" Thus all must be—My Son! with vain regret
" Weep not this visitation, nor forget
" More active claims: Ne'er must this honour'd clay
" On shores unblest await the final day.'
" Midst taunts of Infidels, that mock our pain,
" We bear the unconscious Hero to the main,
" And hoist the homeward sail: with sudden sweep
" The tempest came, and o'er the boiling deep
" As arrow swift, we drove. The furious blast
" Rends every sail, and falls the groaning Mast
" Scatt'ring destruction round. Day's noontide hour
" Was wrapt in gloom—the helm its wonted pow'r
" Lost; all was terror, darkness, and despair!
" Now midst the lightning's momentary glare
" I mark'd the unwearied Monk; calm and serene
" He cheer'd the fainting crew- -in voice and mien

" He mov'd a God. Beside the coffin'd dead
" Desperate I sank, all hope of life was fled.
" Sudden the humbled blasts forget to rave,
" And twilight dawns along the gleaming wave.
" But horror yet was ours ! the insidious tide
" Pour'd streaming thro' the Vessel's gaping side.
" Abandon'd by the Crew, whose headlong speed
" Sprang to the boat, nor would our anguish heed,
" We clasp'd each other, and on bended knee
" Waited our fate. Sweet smil'd the summer sea,
" In whose dread womb to never ending night
" Slow, slow, we sank. 'It comes !' in wild delight
" The Father cried ; 'swift tilting o'er the wave
" Mark yon blest sail ; it onward comes to save.'
" Sudden some Pow'r, deep, deep, in Ocean's bed
" Resistless dragg'd me. O'er my wretched head
" The whirling waters clos'd. Once more above
" Buoyant I rose, and panting, struggling, strove
" To reach the bark, whence eager voices broke
" Cheering my efforts : fainter grew each stroke :
" 'Twas now St. Barnard, ere the insatiate main
" Shrin'd me for ever, with convulsive strain

" Snatch'd me to life. Thus sav'd by Worth so rare,
" That life seem'd doubly dear. ' Thy grateful pray'r
" To Heav'n, my Son, and not to Man be paid,
" For what is Man, if Heav'n refuse its aid !
" 'Twas now a voice familiar hail'd my name ;
" I turn'd and dark forebodings shook my frame.
" He, whose tried faith, nor bribe nor threat could shake,
" Jasper before me stood. What words can speak
" My swelling heart, as with reluctant tone,
" He breath'd the tale, that told my dreams o'erthrown
" Of wedded bliss, my name disgrac'd, my brow
" Branded like Cain's. Yes, all at one fell blow
" All that gave charm to life, clean gone ! my brain
" Reel'd to the sudden shock. I dar'd arraign
" The officious zeal that dragg'd me from the wave !
" The searching look the frowning Father gave
" Aw'd me to silence. ' Son ! for good alone
" When did'st thou covenant with thy God, unknown
" The sense of ill ? Oft what we evils deem
" Prove salutary trials : from thy dream
" Rouse thee to better thoughts. Upon thy head
" A price is set—alas ! in Ocean's bed

" Fit tomb, capacious as the Hero's fame,
" Sleeps he, whose voice had burst the clouds of Shame
" That thicken round thee!' All is lost! I cried,
" And what can save me now? the greedy tide
" Hides too that Scroll, that, with an Angel's tongue,
" Had sham'd the Senate, and disprov'd the wrong.'
" ' A Christian and despair! 'tis here! that Scroll
" Where lives inscrib'd thy Kinsman's gen'rous soul.
" A Christian and despair!' His kindling eye
" Gleam'd with celestial rapture, as on high
" He rais'd it: humbled at his feet I fell;
" I could not speak, aw'd by the fearful spell
" That cloth'd his solemn voice. 'My Son! I read
" Those gracious signs. When driv'n to desp'rate need,
" Think of this moment; idly mock no more
" The Majesty of Heav'n!' O, never wore
" Reproof so mild a form! like genial dew,
" It cheer'd, refresh'd, enlarg'd my bounded view
" Beyond life's petty space. 'Now haste,' he cried,
" ' Pursue thy wretched Sire, thy truant Bride;
" While I, and soon shall mighty Truth prevail,
" Before the Senate tell the eventful tale.'

" 'Twas done. I reach'd the Rhone's familiar wave,
" And turn'd to sorrow o'er a Mother's grave.
" Blest be the Pow'r, that led my wand'rings here!
" I feel thy clasping arms—I seem to hear
" My Mother's voice—earnest of future joy
" O may this meeting prove!"

My gallant Boy
Here clos'd his tale: the various turns of woe
Beguil'd the road. Now Hope's expanding glow
Illum'd our path. St. Barnard on our side,
Soon Truth shall reign omnipotent! the pride
Of Genoa's Senate, humbled to the dust,
Shall hear his voice, and own the charge unjust.
Now sadder thoughts usurp the cheerful theme:
Should the sweet Vision prove no flatt'ring dream,
Should the proud Senate blot the foul disgrace,
And show'r on Julian what Colonna's race
E'er own'd of wealth or honour, where, O where,
Are they, for whose lov'd sake the pomp would wear
Its sweetest value? Still we journey'd on
Cheering each other, till my eager Son

With flashing look, and wild convulsive cry
Announc'd far Genoa's spires: He seem'd to fly,
I follow'd near—the barrier gates were past—
We reach the Senate's column'd pile at last.
It chanc'd, conven'd on urgent points of state,
The assembled Council held the grave debate.
With stately step, and high determin'd air,
That scorn'd to sue, but claim'd admittance there,
My Julian slow advanc'd. A pause ensued,
When now expos'd to gen'ral view we stood.
Abrupt the Chief arose. 'Twas he whose tongue
Drove me an exile forth, with deadly wrong
Blasting that Youth whose dauntless heart, e'en here
Before their dread tribunal, knew not fear.
" Welcome, much injur'd Youth, Colonna's heir!
" Proud Genoa owns thee now! She bids thee share
" Her warmest love. In thee Colonna's line
" Survives; its wealth, its honours, all are thine!"
" Mock me no more!" the indignant Julian cry'd,
" Have not your acts proclaim'd me far and wide
" An outcast robber? tost from tongue to tongue,
" My name resounds amongst your City's throng

" Akin to infamy: thus sham'd, disgrac'd,
" Your praise is mock'ry! be this blot effac'd,
" Or prove my guilt." As if one impulse mov'd,
The assembled Nobles rose. " O, thou belov'd
" Of great St. Barnard! 'tis with pride we hail
" Thy gallant bearing: thy domestic tale
" We've heard from holy lips: 'tis ours to own
" Conviction of its truth. Not we alone,
" The enthusiastic cry thro' ev'ry street
" Is all for thee; Thy triumph is complete.
" Approach, Colonna, with thy Equals share
" That rank, those honours 'tis thy right to wear."
'Twas like a dream! a Father best can tell
The blissful tears I shed. My bosom's swell
Heighten'd yet more, when from his seat of state
Not now, as erst, with selfish pride elate
And voice of scorn, the venerable Chief
Advanc'd to greet. " With mingled shame and grief
" I grasp this hand; canst thou the past forget?
" Yet art thou well aveng'd! when last we met
" I had a Son: like thine, methought he grew
" A mirror, where our high-born Youths might view

" Their fairest pattern: deaf to ev'ry tale
" That dar'd with sland'rous breath my ears assail,
" I blindly doated. In an evil hour
" When birth and beauty throng'd the festal shore,
" In Genoa's sight, foil'd by thy Julian's sword,
" O'erpower'd, disgrac'd he lay. I deep deplor'd
" The public shame: it rankled at my heart!
" Here, where no partial warmth should bear a part,
" It stain'd the judgment seat. With daring tongue
" I drove a Father hence, whose only wrong
" Was pleading for a child. Heav'n mark'd my pride,
" And Vengeance linger'd not. Would he had dy'd
" My wretched Son! beneath thy Julian's blade!
" I had not wept his deeds of blackest shade,
" His ignominious end. Yes here, e'en here,
" The Father struggled with the judge! no tear
" I since have shed: these purple robes conceal
" A heart, whose wounds no skill, no time, can heal."

Could wealth ensure repose, or honours rest,
Blest were my Julian, and his Father blest!

Oft from the public gaze, we turn'd apart
To dwell on days gone by, with sadden'd heart.
From those fair bow'rs, the scene of wedded love,
No voice could lure him, no entreaties move.
Slow mining grief his manly frame decay'd;
I saw, and shudder'd at the wreck it made.
One morn, his looks with fire unwonted bright,
"Father! St. Barnard, midst the calm of night
"Beside me stood. He chid, severe yet mild,
"My sinful grief. 'Should heav'n withhold thy Child,
"Ask thy own heart the cause. Where now,' he said,
"'Thy sacred vow, that sooth'd a dying bed?'
"Father, a God of vengeance heard the vow
"And yet I slumber! ere the wrathful blow
"Burst o'er my head, let me to Sion's aid
"Outstrip the wind, and with this stainless blade
"Uphold Colonna's name!" I bless'd the dream,
Swiftly we bounded o'er the Ocean stream
To Acre's crowded port. His buoyant frame
New strung with vigour, and the hallow'd flame
Of hope and duty glowing at his breast,
My Julian leap'd ashore. St. Barnard press'd

The Hero in his arms. For three long years
Still side by side, amid the foremost spears
We fought, we bled. Oft, when the parted fight
A short-liv'd sabbath kept, yon lamp of night
Watch'd our lone converse, while the o'erwearied host
Slept round. Oft too would Julian fondly boast,
That Heav'n, approving of his labours past,
Would crown his hopes, and bless his search at last.

" Thy vow redeem'd, and brightest laurels won,
" This day," St. Barnard cried, " thy work is done.
" On to the fight! thy last proud honours reap!
" At dawn, thy white wing'd bark shall homeward sweep."
As Julian heard, I mark'd his kindling look,
The exulting glow, the well earn'd praises woke.
On to the fight! his Courser seem'd to share
The Rider's joy, and tread on fields of air.
Yet then, e'en then, Fate aim'd its deadliest blow;
The Sun, which rose in splendour, set in woe.
When all was hope and rapture's wildest swell,
The death stroke came, my gallant Julian fell!

E'en now, this night, methought the oblivious tomb
Had giv'n up its dead, with all its bloom,
And proud display of Youth. O, not in vain
Knock'd Nature at my heart! He lives again,
Lives in his long-lost Child, whose arrowy flight
Mock'd my vain cry. Sweet Jesu! guide me right.
One word, one look, would all the past efface;
These eyes may yet be clos'd by one of Julian's race!
Thou, gentle Malcolm! if thy happier feet
Anticipate my search, with warmth entreat
The unconscious Youth; bid him, like lightning, haste
To bless this aged breast.

All doubt was past.
Like some poor Wretch, that from delicious sleep
Starts, midst the thunder's roar, the whirlwind's sweep,
Malcolm bewilder'd stood. 'Twas fenc'd around
With proof so strong, no avenue he found
To scape the dread conviction. From that Shrine
Must he with horror turn, whose beams divine

Once kindled adoration? must he hate
Her, on whose steps his blessings us'd to wait,
As, like some minist'ring Angel, on she mov'd
Dispensing mercy? thus rever'd, belov'd,
Aw'd by the specious brightness of her brow,
Slander was mute, but laugh'd triumphant now!
Shudd'ring he paus'd: tumultuous thro' his brain
Rush'd thoughts of dreadful hue: the black'ning train
Stung him to madness: "Spare me, spare me, Death!
"Till in the Mother's ear the sounds I breathe
"Of tenfold horror, snatch from yawning hell
"Her yet unconscious soul, ere Incest swell
"The tide of guilt! thou too, poor virgin flow'r!
"Wretched Matilda, born in luckless hour,
"Soon shalt thou list the knell with pale affright
"That severs peace and thee! sepulchral night
"Hangs on thy morn of love. Tho' purer flame
"Ne'er glow'd in Vestal bosom, 'tis a dream
"Whence thou wilt wake appall'd! thou canst not kneel
"To Heav'n for aid. E'en Heav'n from such appeal
"Would shrink aghast. O why, conflicting fate!
"Must I plant daggers where I cannot hate?"

The Vet'ran wept. "'Tis anguish to proceed,
" And yet to pause, no mercy. Tho' I bleed
" At ev'ry pore, yet must I fearless dare
" The coming woe! thou too"—no Monk was there;
The glimm'ring dawn extended view deny'd,
No voice, save Echo, to his call reply'd.
He sought in vain. " It matters not—if Heav'n
" Has to my charge the fearful errand giv'n,
" Alone I go: O could I mount the breeze,
" Swifter than thought, o'er intervening seas
" I'd reach the fatal coast." As when of yore
The Prophet-Seer, God's awful mandate bore
To rouse some high-vic'd City from its dream,
And Visitation's bursting wrath proclaim,
Awful he issu'd forth, his lab'ring breast
Big with the words of fate, the dread behest;
Thus with fire-darting eye, with hurried tread,
Swift down the westward steep the Vet'ran sped.
A shout, repeated oft, now checks his feet,
And wak'd to calmer thoughts. He turn'd to greet
That warrior Youth, that long in durance pent
Inglorious, now on deeds of daring bent,

Again rush'd forth, his limbs by health new strung,
Glitt'ring in steel. Beside his courser hung
The faithful Page, light as the bounding roe,
Gazing at intervals, with upturn'd brow
And sunny smile, that face that with delight
Beam'd ever on him. Oft in mimic fight
Sportive he pois'd the lance, whose massive weight
Mock'd his too feeble arm. His friendless state,
The fond regard his ev'ry look betray'd,
Drew in close folds, each hour still stronger made,
St. Aubyn's heart. With wild impassion'd tone
" Just Heav'n!" the Vet'ran cry'd, " for thou alone
" Canst work the change, avert the o'erwhelming tide
" Of hopeless love, ere its fierce billows hide
" The lost Matilda; bid its current flow
" Where halcyon peace shall lull the storm of woe.
" O, let this Knight a purer flame inspire,
" And from her bosom chase unhallow'd fire!
" So shall the blessing wake our thankful praise,
" And disappoint the grave." In dumb amaze
St. Aubyn heard—his heart beat quick—his frame
Disorder'd shook—but whence the gloomy flame

That darts from Selim's look, where beam'd e'en now
A Seraph's meekness?—with indignant brow,
" Malcolm, this ill-tim'd warmth! is this an hour
" For love, for selfish thoughts, when perils lower
" Round your undaunted King, who from defeat
" More glorious rises? haste with duteous feet,
" And like a wall of brass his path defend!"
He paus'd—" let not this warmth, Sir Knight, offend!
" I could not bear your frown." With fond alarm
That fear'd to give offence, his mailed arm
He clasp'd. " Beshrew me, boy! e'en Woman's love
" Must yield to thine—fear not—can I reprove
" Where all is grateful? 'Tis to thee I owe
" The stranger joys, which health and freedom know."

As slow to Acre's port they wound their way,
'Twas like a rout; scatter'd in wild dismay,
Pour'd lawless bands; the dying and the dead
Strew'd all the track, midst useless pillage spread.
Had the proud foe improv'd the gath'ring dread,
The sword had whelm'd an unresisting prey,
The Cross had mourn'd the exterminating day.

Within the City's walls the rolling crowd
Successive throng'd; there Faction rag'd aloud,
Aiming at friendly breasts the unnatural blow,
While meagre Famine swell'd the tide of woe.
Still ev'ry Western gale to Richard's ear
Came fraught with England's sighs; disdaining fear,
In open day, Rebellion stalk'd more bold,
And treach'rous France, by treaties uncontroll'd,
Fann'd the wide flame. The indignant Monarch swore
Revenge—he gave the word—the fatal shore
His Warriors quit, and plow the homeward way;
Wreck of that host, that late with streamers gay
And stern defiance, like a meteor, blaz'd,
While mighty Nations trembled, as they gaz'd.
Ambition's dream was past: th' ensanguin'd field,
The Martyr crown, to calmer judgment yield.
And such their fate, whose whirlwind passions scorn
The sober counsels, of experience born.

Fair blew the Summer breeze—the vessel flies,
And shouts exulting from the deck arise.

As faded from his sight the sinking strand,
St. Aubyn mus'd the past. That vassal band
Which at his call resign'd the sweets of home,
Now slept in foreign graves; their fearful doom
'Twas his to tell, thro' all his wide domain
To wake the groan, his cares must soothe in vain!
The chill of loneliness oppress'd his heart.
E'en he, in kindred ties could claim no part.
Home wore no smiles for him—his orphan feet
E'en there, a dreary solitude would meet.
Yet there was one, whose voice a charm supplied—
Still hung the gentle Selim at his side
Watching his looks, as if the fond employ
Claim'd every thought. He gaz'd the endearing boy,
And felt, and grateful felt, how blest to prove
The thrilling tenderness of unbought love!
Once when the Moonbeam trembled on the flood,
And slept the o'erwearied crew, by toil subdued,
Unaw'd as erst by Honour's stern controul,
Matilda's image o'er his bosom stole.
He breath'd her name, nor deem'd by mortal ear
The murmur heard; It chanc'd, that ling'ring near

The Vet'ran caught the sound. "She's thine, she's thine!
" A Mother's rapt'rous tear shall flow like mine
" To greet thee as her Son." " Insult me not,"
St. Aubyn breathless cried. " Such blissful lot
" Is not for me—Malcolm, to thee alone
" What to myself I scarce have dar'd to own,
" Is now betray'd. I mark that honest brow,
" That tear-wet cheek, thou dost not mock me now!"
" I mock thee not," and while the Vet'ran spoke,
Slow was his tone, and serious was his look,
" Thou knows't, for wide the tale, Matilda's charms
" Were doom'd, from earliest days, to Edmund's arms.
" Aw'd by the Mother's frown, the suitor train
" The chase abandon'd, where pursuit was vain.
" But Nature shudders at the destin'd tie,
" Its very thought is big with agony!
" Blest be the Pow'r that bade him turn aside,
" And woo, in distant climes, a stranger bride.
" Tho' wreck'd the mother's hope, yet soon like me
" She'll breathe the pray'r, and bow the grateful knee.
" All may be well." " What dreadful mystery
" Lurks, Malcolm, in thy speech? thou seem'st to me

" Some prophet, on whose lips the awe-struck ear
" Hangs shudd'ring. Wonder, not unmix'd with fear,
" Swells at my breast: thou pausest, and thy brow
" More darkly glooms." " Question no farther now—
" Ere long I'll lift the pall that shrouds the rest
" And all shall be reveal'd. I've deem'd it best
" To warn thee thus—thy shallow doubts resign,
" Start to the goal, and beauty's prize be thine."
Abrupt he turn'd away. " O yet remain
" Thou fearful riddler!" but the call was vain.
He wept, implor'd; the Vet'ran's heart was steel'd,
His lips impenetrable silence seal'd.
Now o'er the wave emerging dim to view,
Peer'd Albion's pearly cliff. The impatient crew
Point the lov'd spot, on whose maternal breast
Affection woo'd them, to its hallow'd rest.
'Twas now the Vet'ran grasp'd St. Aubyn's hand,
" Scarce could my heart thy pleading looks withstand:
" Yet but a little while! not thine alone
" This keen suspense." Like one benumb'd to stone
St. Aubyn gaz'd that speck, so soon to prove
Hope's blissful haven, or the grave of love.

Shake off, lost Youth, this slav'ry of the mind !
Think of thy King, thy comrades left behind.
E'en while a prey to visionary sighs
Thy soul, dissolv'd in am'rous slumber, lies,
Again the sword of slaughter is unsheath'd,
And Richard's brows with deathless glories wreath'd.
What though the exterminating oath be past,
And o'er the Cross clos'd Fate's dark billows fast,
Aw'd by his voice, the waves retir'd dismay'd,
And his stern axe the bursting deluge stay'd.
But far and wide shall pilgrim songs resound
His wondrous deeds, and wake amazement round.
He proffer'd peace, but not inglorious sued,
And the clasp'd hands compos'd the deadly feud.
His gen'rous Foe the holy gates unbarr'd:
Now o'er the blessed scenes, the proud reward
Of all their toil, the Franks impatient pour'd.
Those hands, deep furrow'd with the pond'rous sword,
Now wav'd the palm branch ! Now 'twas theirs to tread
That hallow'd mount, where bow'd a Saviour's head
In patient agony :—but when beside
The holy tomb, in undistinguish'd tide,

Kings, princes, prelates, midst a meaner train,
All ranks, all ages, knelt, the rapt'rous strain
Of hallelujah rose! each swelling breast
Was full, was satisfied, of all possest
That life could offer. E'en their haughty foes
Suppress'd their scorn: o'er their dark bosoms rose
A feeling undefin'd, that rous'd the sigh,
"'Thou hast no part in this, Hypocrisy!"

END OF BOOK II.

MATILDA.

BOOK III.

FAITH.

O FAITH, thou well-spring of eternal day!
Before we drank thy wave, our pilgrim way
Dark wild'ring clouds o'erhung; by doubt confin'd
No certain truths illum'd the erring mind.
How weak the lore, by Grecian Sages taught!
They knew thee not, and all their pride was nought.
Thy voice was heard! from heav'n the accents came,
And gave the mental pow'rs their happiest aim.
Thou bad'st the soul on wings of rapture soar,
And, front to front, the only God adore.
Tho' Persecution bare the vengeful blade,
And call terrific torture to her aid,

Unaw'd by threat'ning flame, by beast of prey,
The Christian Martyrs win their gradual way.
Singly they stand against a world in arms,
Their only armour, Truth's resistless charms.
In vain their foes, to crush the fearless few,
Exhaust known torments, and imagine new,
The march of Faith proceeds, and cot, and throne,
And distant isle, the heav'nly Stranger own.

Oft when Oppression vex'd the unshaken race,
And cheer'd her thirsty blood-hounds to the chace,
From haunts of Men the hunted Outcast fled,
Where savage wilds their shelt'ring barriers spread;
Invading scenes, o'er which, thro' ages past,
Its mystic seal deep-musing Silence cast.
Now first loud choral voices swelling deep,
Rose on the desert gale! her iron sleep
Astonish'd Echo burst, and flung around
Thro' all her answ'ring haunts, the inspiring sound
Hymning the praise of God. On summit high
Of steep precipitous hung, the aching eye
Caught the lone cell: aloft it seem'd to ride,
Like the blest bark above the billowy tide

That delug'd all beneath; like that contain'd
All, that on earth of piety remain'd.
  Oft amid Alpine snows, thro' ages pil'd,
When sinks the wilder'd wretch, with terror wild,
On the night-storm a voice of comfort rides;
A shape imperfect to his rescue glides.
Some meek Recluse the desp'rate hazard tries,
And, midst the whirling mass, his work of mercy plies.

MATILDA.

BOOK III.

WHAT beauteous Vision from yon airy tow'r
Still bends, regardless of the passing hour,
While stream her raven tresses to the gale,
Their hue contrasted by her snowy veil ?
'Tis fair Matilda: reckless of the blast
O'er the dark main her ling'ring eyes are cast;
Not yet, its red-cross beaming o'er the tide,
That gallant ship her patient watch descry'd
Whose teeming womb the brave De Clifford bore,
Her noble Sire, to Syria's reeking shore,

When round their Lord his swarming vassals pour'd,
And bar'd with frantic zeal the exterminating sword.
Then England! rushing at thy King's command,
What countless myriads darken'd all thy strand,
To snatch sad Salem from inglorious doom,
And bathe with burning tears a Saviour's tomb.
Triumphant shouts the holy freight pursu'd,
By fav'ring breezes wafted o'er the flood.
A flame unearthly fir'd each rolling eye,
As Glory wav'd the banner'd Cross on high,
Pointing to distant fields of blest renown,
Where dying Champions won the Martyr's crown.
O! then across each visionary mind
Glanc'd not a thought of Kindred ties behind!
There Beauty mourn'd in solitary bow'r
The madd'ning tide of superstition's pow'r.
The new-made Bride in speechless anguish stands,
The Mother, raving wild, her child demands.
And still and lone is many a wide domain,
Reft of its Baron Chief, and vassal train.

When thro' the land peal'd Sion's thrilling call,
With cries of vengeance shook De Clifford's hall.
The red-cross signal stream'd on turret high,
And o'er Dunelmia roll'd the gath'ring cry.
Fierce swept its hardy brave to Heorta's coast,
All selfish fears in prostrate Sion lost.

While wedded love upon his bosom hung,
And round her parting Sire Matilda clung,
The Chieftain sternly smil'd, too proud to feel,
And mock'd, with careless taunts, the wild appeal.

" Now by the holy Cross, whose slave I bend,
" Peace, Dame ! and let this idle clamour end.
" Thou too, my Child ! thy bursting sobs restrain ;
" 'Tis Heav'n that calls, nor shall its call be vain.
" Son of the wave, arise ! from yonder strand
" Loud echoing shouts their ling'ring Lord demand."

Edmund exulting heard ; his panting frame
Buoyant with hope, to prove his heart's young dream.
His parting glance on fair Matilda fell ;
Her quicken'd pulse confess'd its pow'rful spell.
O ! well her Mother's searching fondness guess'd
Why rose those wild emotions in her breast.

" One moment yet, my Lord! 'tis not to sway
" Thy heart's resolve, I crave this short delay,
" Of all thy vassal crowd, how few remain
" To shield thy castle, and its lone domain!
" Bethink thee, should our solitary state
" Allure the prowling Robber to our gate!
" Let not thy Wife, thy Daughter plead in vain;
" O let that gentle Youth our guard remain."
" Gentle I ween, good Kate! in beauty's bow'r;
" But by our holy Faith, a fairer flow'r
" Boasts not this gallant isle: tho' few his years,
" In manly sports the foremost prize he bears.
" O, hadst thou seen his eyes' awaken'd flame,
" When hallow'd vengeance rous'd our Sons of fame,
" Heard his bold suit, that all repulse defy'd,
" To share the distant war, with new-born pride
" E'en thou hadst hush'd thy terrors at the sight,
" And giv'n the high-soul'd stripling to the fight.
" Now hear me Kate! not all our pray'rs combin'd
" Could win this gentle Youth to lag behind.
" More sweet to him to brave the stormy hour
" Than idly linger in a Lady's bow'r.

" In tented fields his sword must carve renown,
" His country, parentage, alike unknown.
" Again those shouts!" the hasty blessing o'er,
He turn'd abrupt, to reach the clam'rous shore.

Where the high tow'r o'erhung St. Hilda's bay,
The anxious fair ones, wound their thoughtful way.
Thence the proud stirring scene, display'd below,
Breath'd a wild charm, that lull'd intrusive woe.
'Twas now they felt, how pure the inspiring zeal
That link'd all hearts at Sion's dread appeal!
But he, the warrior Youth! his well-known plume
Anxious they mark'd, and all was gath'ring gloom.
Bright was the flashing steel that cas'd his frame,
But brighter still his eyes' impatient flame,
Big with delight to change the mimic spear
For war's stern tragedy, and stormy cheer.

Midst heart breath'd sighs, and blessings oft renew'd,
Wistful they watch'd his progress o'er the flood,
Which smil'd, array'd in more than wonted charms,
And seem'd to woo him with parental arms.

As yet no word from fair Matilda broke,
Tho' her whole soul shot kindling from her look.
As yet 'twas wounded pride, that nerv'd her frame,
And flush'd her cheek with indignation's flame.
He, the lov'd partner in each hope and fear
From rosy childhood, more than brother dear,
Now from her side with cold indifference flew,
Nor breath'd the solace of one sad adieu.
As the bark lessens to her aching eyes,
The transient sternness of her bosom dies.
Love, mighty Love, his power till now unknown,
Whose infant flame thro' silent years had grown,
Blaz'd forth, and made her burning heart his throne.
Ah lawless tyrant! what a host of woes
Rous'd at thy beck, assail'd her Youth's repose!
Scarce has the bursting bud, in blushes drest,
Bar'd to the Zephyr's kiss its incens'd breast,
Thy venom fastens on the virgin bloom,
The blighted Victim droops, and meets untimely doom.
" Sons of the Cross, farewell!" the Mother cried,
While yet the sinking sail was dim descry'd,

" May he, in whose all pow'rful name array'd
" A world embattled draws the vengeful blade,
" And onward, like a mighty whirlwind, sweeps
" Where in the dust forgotten Sion weeps,
" O may his arm, the glorious harvest o'er,
" Each laurell'd Warrior to his home restore!
" Then how the breathless crowd will linger near,
" And drink the eventful tale with greedy ear!
" Those knees, round which his blooming children twine,
" Have bent with reverence at a Saviour's shrine.
" Those lips, whose touch his children strive to meet,
" Have kiss'd the ground made sacred by his feet.
" My Child! O let no selfish plaints defame
" The impetuous transports of this holy flame.
" Pure is its source: 'tis not the world's applause,
" Our Faith's the pole-star of this glorious cause!"
A brightness fill'd her eye; 'twas quickly past:
A sudden gloom her sadd'ning brow o'ercast.
" Son of the wave! O could yon mighty Sea
" Rend from thy birth its veil of mystery!
" Yes, early doom'd to wretchedness and tears,
" Thro' the dark cloud, that shrouds thy infant years,

" Glimmers no guiding ray, to mark thy line;
" But scarce a Mother's warmth can equal mine.
" Thy duteous love which all my cares o'erpaid,
" But chief, that soul, by danger undismay'd,
" That pants to rival Vet'ran Sons of fame,
" Ere manhood's sinewy strength has nerv'd thy frame,
" Rush o'er my bosom with resistless sway,
" And all its proud emotions fade away.
" That dreadful eve! I hear its ravings yet,
" When Sea and Sky in furious conflict met;
" When thou amid the tempest's deaf'ning roar,
" Wert hurl'd in childhood on our stranger shore;
" When the brave bark and all its gallant Crew
" One moment snatch'd for ever from the view.
" O sleeps thy Mother in the cavern'd Sea,
" Or lingers still to weep thy loss like me?
" Why, as thy opening form to manhood grew
" And my rapt gaze with spell resistless drew,
" Glar'd the dread vision of the days gone by,
" When first my ear drank love's perfidious sigh?
" Down, busy heart! be mine to weep, to pray,
" If pray'rs, like mine, can win to heav'n their way.

" Lost wretch! how fearful is thy future doom,
" If Conscience sleep not in the silent tomb!"
Her snowy arms upon her bosom crost,
The Matron bow'd, in speechless anguish lost.
O ne'er did grief a form more touching wear,
The lids unsullied by a starting tear!
The brow, where wan despair had fix'd its throne,
Hopeless of peace, save with the dead alone!

Sweet danc'd the Summer on the sparkling deep,
When the brave bark, from Heorta's crowded steep,
Bore its proud freight, while fill'd with gath'ring fears
Fond bosoms beat, and eyes were wet with tears.
When the next Summer pour'd its genial ray,
Those tears still fell, the Crew were far away.
The pensive Maid, in solitary woe,
Climb'd the tall steep and watch'd the expanse below:
Oft envying her, upon whose fragrant breast
The rosy Babe lay hush'd in balmy rest.
She, soothing task! the ling'ring hours beguil'd
Tracing the absent Father in his child.

Stern Winter past, once more Dunelmia's vale
Fair Summer walk'd, but where the expected sail?
No sound is heard along the cavern'd shore,
Save the hoarse bird, or billows' hoarser roar.
And if a solitary form is seen,
Like sullen spectre, stalking o'er the scene,
'Twas Hope that wing'd the trembler to the stream,
Cheer'd the lone day, inspir'd the nightly dream,
And, as each hour with disappointment pass'd,
Whisper'd the morrow would bring peace at last.

The morrow came—'twas noon—night clos'd around—
Again the midnight couch in tears was drown'd.
Now dim and hollow is each rayless eye;
Hope, the last friend, had sought her native sky.
To deepest solitude the Mourner flies,
There fondly bids the lone memorial rise;
There broods on happiness for ever fled,
And weeps the Husband, Lover, Son, as dead.

Once as the tardy dawn its blushes cast
Bringing new hours of woe to augment the past,

Matilda from her wakeful pillow rose
To woo, midst nature's scenes, a short repose.
'Twas now the dying year; with fitful swell
The blast loud sweeping, peal'd its sullen knell.
Whirl'd by the sudden gust in eddies round,
The falling leaves bestrew'd the rustling ground;
And if a wither'd wand'rer chanc'd to rest,
Stopt in its earthward course, upon her breast,
It seem'd to say, "like mine, thy wasting form
"Untimely droops before the blighting storm."
Congenial was the scene. The well known bow'r
Where Edmund's presence wing'd each halcyon hour,
Appear'd, like her, to hopeless grief resign'd,
Flinging its faded tresses to the wind.
As o'er each lov'd memorial, ling'ring slow,
The pale Enthusiast wept, a sudden glow
Crimsons her cheek, she hears a rustling tread;
Hopes start anew, like visions from the dead!
A war-clad Figure glides along the wood,
Approaching where the gazing Statue stood.
'Twas he, for honest service long renown'd,
The trusty Malcolm! When the war trump's sound

Peal'd wide the blest Crusade, he fearless flew
To sheathe his aged limbs in arms anew.
Yes, from the distant strife, of weal or woe
He tidings bore, that seal'd her fate below!
He reach'd the bow'r. Matilda springs to meet,
And falls in wild disorder at his feet.
Upwards she lifts a look of deepest woe,
Burning to ask yet shudd'ring still to know.
How fix'd the Vet'ran's gaze! the breathing stone
He deem'd no stranger, but he paus'd to own.
"How chang'd from her," he sigh'd, "if such she be!
"Whom, from the rosy hours of infancy,
"These eyes have watch'd in radiant beauty grow
"Love's brightest flow'r, alas! how faded now."
"Speak, Malcolm, speak, a wretched Child relieve!
"My Father! where's my Father? does he live?"
"He lives, thy Father lives! ere evening close,
"His voice shall soothe thy bosom to repose."
She grasp'd his hand: the glow of quick surprise
Flushes her cheek, and lights her sunken eyes.
"Malcolm, it ever was thy fond employ
"To turn the Mourner's plaint to hymns of joy!

" He lives: ye bow'rs, your wonted charms resume!
" O share my rapture, as ye shar'd my gloom.
" My Edmund comes! ye winds, the tidings bear!
" Let ev'ry distant glade my transport share.
" O sound more sweet than Summer's scented gale!
" Hear it, thou rolling main, wood, mountain, vale!"
As from her lips the burst of triumph broke,
The Vet'ran turn'd away, with sadden'd look.
" Lady, thy Father comes, but in his train
" Thy Edmund comes not. Still this shaft of pain
" Is wing'd with comfort: 'tis the lust of fame
" Which yet no toil can chill, no peril tame,
" That lures him far away. But there is one
" Whose youthful arm, inspir'd by thee alone,
" E'en hostile praises won, whose constant love
" Not the bright charms of Eastern Maids could move,
" The brave St. Aubyn: twice his sword of fire
" Sav'd in the battle's front thy reeling Sire.
" Nor could that grateful Sire the suit reprove
" That ask'd consent to win his Daughter's love.
" Sweet Lady, speak! what means that fearful cry,
" Those hands uprais'd, that glare of agony?"

" Malcolm!" at length her hollow accents broke,
" Death, death, were mercy to this sudden stroke.
" My Father! can a Father hurl the blow
" That slays his Daughter's peace, her direst foe?
" Hear me, just Heav'n! my solemn vow record,
" Defying change, like thy eternal word.
" This heart is Edmund's! all its pulses own
" Him for their Lord, and throb for him alone.
" If its warm wishes be by thee denied,
" The grave, the grave, shall win me for its bride!"
Mysterious murmurs ran along the wood,
And rose, in deep'ning terrors, from the flood.
The sweeping tempest grew: with horrid glare
The lightning laugh'd, the thunder rent the air.
Amid the deaf'ning strife, in dire dismay
Stretch'd on the earth, the pale Enthusiast lay;
As o'er her ear the peal terrific broke,
To her, she thought, a God of vengeance spoke,
To her, whose call on Heav'n breath'd rash despair,
Not calm reliance on a Father's care.
'Twas past: the war of elements was o'er,
And nought was heard, save Ocean's sullen roar.

Slowly she rose, but Malcolm stood not near,
Whose arm might succour, and whose voice might cheer;
Some stranger Page, such seem'd the gentle Boy,
Had paus'd to aid, yet linger'd curious nigh.
Wond'ring she turn'd each varied charm to trace;
The elastic form, whose ev'ry step was grace.
The jetty curls thick clust'ring o'er his brow,
The cheek, the lip, that sham'd the rose's glow;
But the dark eye—it seem'd for softness made,
Whose melting beam the secret soul betray'd.
Their glances met: sudden its lightning look
Flash'd proud disdain, and fiercest hatred spoke.
"Whence, and who art thou?" was her pleading cry;
The Youth indignant turn'd, nor deign'd reply.
Near, a lone Chapel stood whose walls of white
Cheer'd, o'er the distant wave, the seaman's sight.
She reach'd its humble porch, her throbbing brain
The sport of fears, that reason mock'd in vain.
Sudden, a burst of anguish from within
Swept o'er her ear. Was it some child of sin
Weeping o'er frailties past, its heart-breath'd pray'r,
Now bright with hope, now fraught with deep despair?

Onward she glides: there at the altar rude
Knelt the pale wretch, by fierce remorse subdu'd.
That form, that voice, too well Matilda knew,
Yet scarce could deem the appalling vision true!

" O grow to earth, ye knees, and ceaseless rise,
" My pray'rs, for God accepts the Sacrifice.
" O I had done a deed, whose very name
" O'erwhelms my soul with horror, awe, and shame,
" A deed, from which e'en fiends might shrink aghast,
" And own their catalogue of crimes surpast.
" But He, a God of mercy, interpos'd
" Ere this last dreadful gulph had o'er me clos'd,
" O'er me, whose early years were stain'd with sin,
" Who ne'er could hope his gracious ear to win.
" He comes, not arm'd to hurl the sinner low,
" But love paternal beaming on his brow.
" This day, his guardian arm is stretch'd to save,
" This day Hope's sunshine dawns upon the grave.
" 'Twas thou, my Child, 'twas innocence like thine
" Whose angel meekness turn'd the wrath divine;

" Else had that guardian arm been stretch'd too late,
" Despair and death had been thy early fate.
" These lips, O harrowing thought! had seal'd thy doom,
" This heart had broke upon a daughter's tomb!"

O, with each charm of virtue, honour, fame,
Her glowing heart had fenc'd a Parent's name!
Nor dare one thought of earth-born mould intrude
To stain that heav'n, where all was fair and good,
Now o'er that heav'n a black'ning gloom was spread,
The vision burst, and every charm was fled.
That awe, whose feeling once was agony
Was past, and bitter was her conscious sigh.
Yet in that sigh no deep disgust had part,
But gentlest thoughts o'erflow'd her yielding heart.
E'en while maternal frailty burst to view,
As reverence ebb'd, the tide of pity grew.
Still rapt in pray'r, the unconscious Mother kneels,
As to her side the gliding Phantom steals.
She breathes her Mother's name; alas! the sound
Once hail'd with rapture, now no welcome found.

Why shrinks the Mother from her Child's embrace,
Why low'r those stormy passions o'er her face?
"Was it well done, thus daring to intrude,
"While here, retir'd in holy solitude,
"I commun'd with my God? thy lawless ear
"Has drank those sounds which he alone should hear.
"Hence—far and near the fearful tale proclaim,
"Be thou the herald of a Mother's shame!"
She paus'd for a reply—her eye's wild glare
Scann'd her Child's face, but all was calmness there.
Love, filial love, illum'd her lifted brow,
Like moonlight sleeping on a waste of snow.
"Mother," she sigh'd, "e'en hearts of sternest mould
"Are won by kindness—O! is mine more cold
"Whose veins their vital treasure would resign,
"If the free gift could add one throb to thine?
"Thy deeds of fost'ring care, in countless train,
"Form'd the first links of mem'ry's infant chain;
"And to this hour, how rich the moments prove
"In sweet memorials of maternal love!"
As when dread herald of the tempest near,
A hideous silence sleeps along the air,

The Mother thoughtful stood—the heaving breast,
The changing cheek, her inward strife confess'd.
Now calmly terrible, a dubious joy
Dawn'd on her soul, and fix'd the rolling eye:
Like the red fitful gleam, that charms the sight,
When walks the light'ning thro' the gloom of night.
" Then prove as well thou can'st, thy love sincere!
" If as thou say'st, thy Mother's peace be dear,
" Here at the altar of thy God, one vow
" Breath'd from thy lips, will purest bliss bestow."
" Speed, Mother, speed! enraptured to obey
" These lips will follow, as thou lead'st the way."
" Swear then, that Edmund, he whose infant form
" These shores receiv'd, the nursling of the storm,
" Shall ne'er with thee in nuptial league unite!
" O may'st thou slumber in eternal night,
" And my hot tears bedew thy early tomb,
" Ere thy soul sink beneath so dire a doom!"
Alas, Matilda! at the death-fraught sound,
Where was that sainted glow, that lately crown'd
Thy uprais'd brow? that keen impatience where,
For one so lov'd, the unknown vow to dare?

"'Tis past," she faintly breath'd in hollow tone,
"Ne'er can this heart its former vow disown!
"'Tis past! recorded in the eternal page;
"O what shall now a Mother's pangs assuage?
"Come death," with outspread arms she wildly cried,
"With thee is bliss, receive thy willing bride;
"Till in thy shelt'ring calm the Child repose,
"No hope can dawn upon a Mother's woes!"
The maniac scream, which from that Mother broke,
Thro' ev'ry aisle the lonely echoes woke.
"Daughter, what hideous shapes beset my brain!
"Speak, tho' distraction follow in its train,
"Speak the whole truth! name, name, that former vow,
"And hurl thy Parent to the depths of woe!"
On the cold pavement sank the shiv'ring maid,
To Earth, to Heav'n, she look'd in vain for aid.
There, her own vow, amid the angry skies,
In deathless characters appals her eyes.
Here, a lov'd Mother, victim of that vow,
Waits from her lips her future doom to know,
And o'er her Child, a breathless statue, hung
To catch the faintest murmur of her tongue.

Tho' mute that tongue, yet eloquence was there:
'Twas Hope's last knell, and rung by fierce despair!
"Lost wretch! a Daughter strikes the fatal blow,
"And conscience, conscience aggravates my woe!
"'Tis mine to end the strife." With headlong speed
Forth had she rush'd, to do a desperate deed,
Did Heav'n in mercy bid the dead awake
From their deep trance, for erring Mortals' sake?
'Twas from the tombs the voice mysterious stole,
That chain'd her flying feet; her frenzied soul
Forgot its dread resolve: no earth-born strain
It seem'd, whose murmurs lull'd her throbbing brain.

Stay, rash Mortal! let the dead
With warning voice avert thy doom.
Think of him, who for thee bled,
Think of judgment yet to come.

Does some Seraph from above
Beckon to his heavenly seat?
Will thy soul unspotted prove,
Nor shrink its awful Judge to meet?

Like thee, impatient of the load,
I spurn'd the life my Maker gave;
Flung back the blessing to my God,
And madly rush'd into the grave.

O could I now the gift recall,
In pray'r I'd waste my latest breath.
Here, here, 'tis horror, darkness all,
There 's no repentance after death!

The voice was mute. O walk not forth, ye dead,
In sheeted terror from your wormy bed,
Lest every heart-string, stretch'd to agony,
The life-chord snap! fly, spell-bound Matron, fly,
Ere the rent tomb expose its hideous night,
And its pale tenant blast thy shudd'ring sight!
O, when the dead their mould'ring chambers leave,
What mortal wight can gaze, and hope to live!
The Matron deem'd some fearful vision near,
Breathless she stood, yet knew not what to fear.
Sudden, each honest feature flush'd with joy,
The Vet'ran breaks to sight, with eager cry!

" They come! e'en now, from yon far mountain's brow
" Their steeds wind slowly to the plain below."
The heart-breath'd shout no answering transport woke;
Upward the Mother rais'd her hopeless look;
That look, no trace of stormy passion bore,
But patient meekness' sainted glow it wore.
Her Child, who knelt a suppliant at her side,
The Mother stoop'd to welcome, not to chide;
The Daughter sprang to meet the endearing call;
The Vet'ran wept; 'twas silent rapture all.

They reach the tow'r. Here ocean blends with sky,
There hills and vales in length'ning prospect lie.
But where that busy hum, whose cheering sound
Rose with the lark, and breath'd contentment round?
Save where two shadowy forms were dimly seen,
'Twas desolation all. How chang'd the scene
Since madd'ning Zeal peal'd wide his thrilling strain,
When o'er Dunelmia's breast, hill, glen and plain
Started to life, and rush'd the gath'ring host
With headlong clamour to the sounding coast!

'Twas Heav'n's own cause! The now deserted bride
Hush'd the deep sigh, and gaz'd with new-born pride;
While the fond Mother rais'd aloft her child,
Pointing its Father's crest, and faintly smil'd.
'Twas Heav'n's own cause! as spread the loud appeal,
From Europe's scabbard leap'd the avenging steel.

Where now the countless host? the plumed pride
That roll'd its billowy pomp in length'ning tide?
And where is he, that from his fair domain
With shouts of triumph led his vassal train,
Like mountain rills to swell the insatiate main?
See where the Chieftain comes, whose haughty brow
Spoke stern defiance, but how humbled now!
With varied pace he moves; now urg'd to speed,
Now gliding slow they mark his snowy steed.
O, does he fear, lest from some lone retreat
Pale forms should rush his homeward steps to greet,
Some wife, child, parent, claiming to be heard
In all the agony of hope deferr'd,
Demanding those for whom all pray'rs are vain,
Whose bones now whiten o'er the hostile plain.

" Brave Youth !" cried Malcolm, " worthy of that Sire
" Whose warrior deeds shall pilgrim lips inspire,
" Still thy lov'd presence cheers that honour'd side
" Thy valour guarded. O if mortal pride
" E'er mix with heav'nly bliss, from starry spheres
" How must thy Father drink with ravish'd ears
" The general shout, that crown'd thy first essay
" In danger's hard fought field of carnage and dismay !
" How oft we saw, the palm of victory won,
" Thy fame in arms by gen'rous deeds outdone !"
Cease, Vet'ran, bid thy ill-tim'd praise subside,
And spare the trembling list'ner at thy side.
Mark her clasp'd hands, her eyes' uplifted beam !
She deems thee cruel, and she well may deem.
More keen the shaft of apprehension flew,
A Mother's lips the unwelcome theme renew.
" Malcolm, true valour every Virtue loves ;
" But join'd with Youth, how fair the union proves !
" To ev'ry heart the ready passport steals,
" And history's page the Champion's glory seals.
" But he, whose trampling steed now strikes the ear,
" Brings claims which e'en the Savage must revere.

" O Daughter, think! but for St. Aubyn's aid,
" Thy Sire had sunk beneath the foeman's blade!"
Yes, claims like these must sternest bosoms move,
But still Matilda felt she could not love.
As soon might Man with puny arm advance
To check the planets in their mystic dance,
As with despotic tyranny control
As pride or int'rest sway, the affections of the soul,
But chiefly love! not that degenerate flame
Ah! better known by Lust's unhallow'd name,
But that whose presence Eden's bow'rs confess'd.
Offspring of heav'n, with heav'n's own essence blest;
Pure as that limpid fount, where changeful skies
And bending flow'rs, salute the ravish'd eyes.
When love like this assails the Virgin's breast.
Tho' first she shrink to greet the stranger guest,
How vain resistance! to the sweet control
The yielding Maid surrenders all her soul.
Mark the unconscious tread, the beamless eye,
The faded cheek, the oft repeated sigh!
Life's active duties yield delight no more.
And all is irksome now that charm'd before.

There was a time, a Parent might have giv'n
His Child relief, and won a saint from heav'n!
That time is past: his Child is Love's alone,
And Persecution deeper roots his throne.
Each rolling storm the God secure defies,
And at his stern command the virgin Martyr dies.

When to his manly heart, with joy sincere,
Those fondly lov'd, scarce glory's self more dear,
The Chief alternate strain'd, each female breast
With varying passion throbb'd: no welcome guest
Was he, else why with half-averted face,
Shrinks thus the Wife to meet his fond embrace?
Haply the high soul'd Chief discern'd it not,
Or in a Daughter's love 'twas all forgot.
When to her arms the impatient Father turn'd,
With answ'ring warmth the pale eyed Trembler burn'd,
Clung to his breast, as if she there would grow,
Alas! She fear'd and wish'd to soothe a foe.
Deep from her bosom sighs convulsive broke,
And all her frame with wild disorder shook.

" Beshrew me, Child !" the impassion'd Father cried,
And vainly strove the obtrusive tear to hide,
" This rapt'rous warmth o'erpow'rs my foolish heart,
" 'Tis long since I have play'd the woman's part.
" I find thee still in filial love the same,
" But start with anguish at thy alter'd frame !
" The roseate cheek, the eye so dewy bright,
" The form whose buoyant graces charm'd the sight,
" Are gone. St. Aubyn ! mark the gentle Maid,
" More fraught with terror, than the hostile blade ;
" Thou knew'st her once, how brave in outward charms!
" And such I fondly hop'd to give her to thy arms ;
" Behold her now." With mild respectful mein
Apart, St. Aubyn gaz'd the passing scene.
His golden locks, freed from the helm's bright load,
In rich profusion o'er his shoulders flow'd,
And had not toil's brown hand been busy there,
His face had dazzled with a hue too fair.
For charms like these, inflam'd with am'rous pain,
Sigh'd Syria's boasted dames, but sigh'd in vain.
Was love his scorn, and glory all his aim ?
O, never bosom shrin'd a purer flame.

His heart by constancy alone was steel'd,
It's ev'ry fold Matilda's name reveal'd.
True as that flow'r, which, when the Lord of day
Starts like a bridegroom on his heav'nly way,
Bares to his glowing lips its golden face,
And hangs unwearied on his west'ring pace;
Turns as he moves, till from its longing sight
The parting idol yield the world to night,
Then weeping droops upon its lofty stem,
Till morn returning wipe each tearful gem.
But she, for whom he spurn'd all other charms,
Clung trembling, shudd'ring, to her Father's arms.
" Father! he comes: thou only can'st relieve;
" He comes to sue, when I have nought to give."
Swift o'er his brow a transient sternness pass'd,
While o'er her face his piercing gaze he cast.
" Child, what mysterious fears these transports move?
" 'Tis not unseemly age, that asks thy love,
" A brighter lot awaits thee; one whose name
" Tho' green in years, outstrips the hard earn'd fame
" Of hoary Warriors, whose aspiring soul
" Ne'er crouch'd beneath created Man's control,

" Now at thy feet, a lowly suppliant sues,
" And life and fame their charms without thee lose.
" Judge thou thyself, nor deem my praise too warm,
" If Glory's wreath e'er grac'd a nobler form."
" Dwell not on that," th' impatient trembler cried,
" Where Virtue reigns, how weak is all beside!
" Ne'er shall my lips their grateful thanks forbear
" To him, who made thy valued life his care.
" But vain all mortal praise; the God of truth
" Will best reward the gallant, generous, Youth."
" Daughter, what joy these heart-breath'd sounds convey
" Yes, Heav'n, the holy Champion will repay
" With bliss hereafter—but this world contains
" One sweet reward for all his toil and pains.
" Thou wert the cause, that in the battle strife
" He risk'd his own to save thy Father's life;
" 'Tis thou the debt of Gratitude must pay,
" And lead where love, where duty points the way."
The white arm'd Maid, soft as a wreath of snow
That gently slides from Teviot's slippery brow,
Sank at his feet—" If e'er thy Child was dear,
" Talk not of love—she cannot, cannot hear."

From her firm hold his suppliant Child he spurn'd
With awful frown, and to the Mother turn'd,
" What mock'ry 's this ? do my own kin disdain
" That wrath, which mighty hosts defy'd in vain ?
" Now hear me Kate ! nor seek, with vain control
" To shake the rooted purpose of my soul.
" Hence, and with speed the bridal robes prepare,
" To-morrow's Sun shall prove this rebel fair."
" My Lord ! this heart, disdaining all deceit,
" Leaps forth with ecstacy thy wish to meet.
" O ! be it mine to bid resistance cease,
" Not arm a Child against a Parent's peace.
" That Youth, whose rare endowments charm the mind,
" In me a zealous advocate shall find.
" Yet more, if she resist the warm appeal,
" Then let our Child parental vengeance feel."
How oft, when anger flashes from the eye,
Its fierceness fades before the mild reply !
Not with more pow'r, the Sun's wide darting light
Quells the rude storm, that rent the robe of Night,
The Chieftain heard : the wrath that fir'd his soul,
While else had burst impatient of control,

The soothing magic of her words confess'd.
As when, in awful march o'er Ocean's breast,
The wild waves rush tumultuous to the strand;
If there no barrier cliff their course withstand,
No more inspiring wonder and dismay,
They sweep the level sands, and spread their rage away.
"Beshrew me, Kate! I like thy humour well,
"Thy lips are potent as some wizard spell.
"I doubt thee not, but deem thy speech sincere;
"'Twere pain indeed to use compulsion here.
"Haply the words, that like the light'ning's stroke
"Pierc'd my whole frame, and keen resentment woke,
"Were but the wand'rings of a Virgin's fears,
"When first the name of love assails her ears.
"Now to our guest each social rite is due;
"These while I pay, do thou thy cares renew
"With zeal redoubled; so to-morrow's Sun
"Shall crown our hopes and hail the triumph won."

When Echo gave no more their parting feet,
The Mother turn'd her shudd'ring Child to greet.

The mutual glance betray'd suspicious dread,
And sweet affection's sunny smile was fled.
As when some pair, whom nuptial league has join'd,
First feel the fiend distrust ensnare the mind,
How life's enchantments fade! where Eden smil'd,
The horizon's bound presents one cheerless wild.
Yield to its with'ring touch, health, fortune, fame,
And hideous fancies feed the growing flame.
Each to the other gloomy silence keeps,
But, when apart, the sad estrangement weeps.
Scarce fiercer change endur'd that rebel band,
Which dar'd th' Omnipotent in arms withstand,
From starry seats, and joy's immortal reign
Hurl'd to profoundest hell, and never dying pain.

"My Child!" with soften'd voice the Mother sigh'd,
"Thy Parent's only hope! whate'er betide
"Our earthly Pilgrimage, sweet peace be thine,
"And round thy path its dearest blessings twine!
"My Child! if Heav'n our mortal date extend,
"On thee the comforts of our age depend.

" O, might a race of thine, with soothing smile
" Hang on my knees, and life's last scene beguile,
" 'Twould bid anew Youth's fairy season bloom,
" And smooth my passage to the silent tomb !"
She paus'd—a dewy gleam o'erspread her eyes,
Whose upturn'd look held commerce with the skies.
" But hence with doubt"—in more impassion'd strain,
" Can children triumph in a Parent's pain ?
" Canst thou, unmov'd, reject our warm appeal ?
" Thou hast not yet to learn, my Child, to feel !
" We from thy lips must joy or woe receive.
" O let not force compel, what love should give !
" But be this day with brightest prospects crown'd ;
" Speak thou assent, and blessings wait the sound."
" Behold thy victim"—from Matilda broke,
While desperation fir'd her haggard look,
" I yield assent—on to the altar lead—
" E'en now—ere madness intercept the deed !"
So wildly shrill her with'ring accents came,
The Mother turn'd away with shiv'ring frame !
No self-devotion breath'd its calmness there,
Resign'd, for other's weal, the worst to dare ;

'Twas like the wretch's desolating scream,
Stretch'd on the rack, disjointed limb from limb!
" Daughter!" at length with still averted look
And every pulse throbb'd fiercely, as she spoke,
" Come and with me a Father's transport share!"
The appalling summons rous'd the torpid fair.
The dire distraction of her mein was flown,
And slow, and solemn, flow'd her alter'd tone.
" O, yet once more let Nature's pleadings rise,
" Nor thou, with cold indifference despise!
" My wand'ring heart was bar'd to thee alone,
" And every wayward pulse to thee was known.
" Yes, 'twas with him, by thee once fondly lov'd,
" Thro' childhood's flow'ry path my footsteps rov'd.
" At eve renew'd, our graver duties done,
" Thy ready smile our careless gambols won.
" One heart, one voice, one source of joy or pain,
" Apart, our dearest wish to meet again.
" Thou knew'st it well! no mild persuasive force
" Then check'd that stream, whose now resistless course
" Defies e'en thy control: such cautious fear
" From dire remorse had sav'd the future year.

" O could this heart, unconscious then of guile,
" Suspect destruction in a Mother's smile ?
" How oft hast thou, with rapture-throbbing breast,
" The lov'd associate of my labours blest !
" How oft, while transport thrill'd my list'ning ears,
" Pray'd, that no other arm, thro' growing years,
" Might shield thy Child ! O, who that Child could blame
" If all her greedy soul imbib'd the flame ?
" Pure as the limpid wave, our noble race
" Spurns the foul wrong, that would its name disgrace.
" Bethink thee, when from distant fields of death
" Our blooming Warrior, crown'd with glory's wreath,
" Shall on the wings of wild impatience move
" To greet these well known haunts of former love,
" How will he breathless seek on ev'ry side
" His youth's companion, and his future bride ?
" In vain to thee the wretched pleader flies,
" Thou, thou wilt triumph in his bursting sighs !
" Well may'st thou raise the streaming eye to heav'n—
" O be a Mother still, and be the past forgiv'n !"
" A Mother still ! that God whose piercing sight
" Reads ev'ry heart, will best our deeds requite.

" With all a Mother's love this heart o'erflows
" For him, who, heedless of thy lost repose,
" Far, far away, now sues, with restless aim,
" A dearer Mistress; Glory is her name.
" Insult not thou our guest; let gentle peace
" Rest on our brows, and all contention cease."

Meantime in thoughtful mood the Warrior guest
Mus'd o'er the past. Now pity swell'd his breast,
Now disappointment, with its ruder breath,
Drown'd pity's still small voice. Thro' fields of death
His sword had sought renown, nor turn'd aside
When Vet'ran cheeks grew pale: no selfish pride
Impell'd his bright career. Love's hallow'd flame
To noblest daring rous'd this Child of fame.
O! there is none of passion's various train
Which can, like Love, so sweetly soothe each pain
That flesh is heir to! O'er the dazzled earth
When walks this Seraph of celestial birth,
Round Youth's soft heart unwonted raptures play,
Age drops his staff and smiles his cares away.

Love speaks the word; the steel-clad hero flies,
And all the tempest of the War defies.
Nor swelling waves, nor vengeful skies control
The dear Idea, graven on his soul.
First in the van, behold his sword of flame!
The humble Champion shrinks to find it fame.
From myriad shouts he turns with heart oppress:
On one alone, its hopes, its wishes rest.
Tho' her sweet toils consenting Beauty spread
And the rich clime delicious languor shed,
Onward he moves, with fix'd unalter'd eye,
And the bright Pageant swims unheeded by.
When the conflicting din of arms is o'er,
With thoughts unchang'd he seeks his native shore;
There waits the sweet reward of all his toil,
The thrilling magic of Matilda's smile.

Now mark this slave of hope's illusive dream
Stretch'd on yon rock, above the ocean stream.
E'en friendship's call was vain: the festive board
Pall'd on the taste, nor could one charm afford.
Those eyes, which, like the orient lamp of day,
Alone could chase his bosom's night away,

That voice, whose melting music could create
Elysium round, that mock'd the frown of fate,
He heard not, saw not there, and all beside
Was blank and desolate: Hope's sunny tide
Was wrapt in fearful gloom. The glaring truth,
With'ring each blooming promise of his youth,
Defy'd all doubt: an unrequited flame
His bosom nurs'd, the past was all a dream.

'Twas night; its shadows deepen'd o'er the wave,
And not a star its twinkling lustre gave:
A wilder roar the black'ning billows flung,
And the deep caves with awful murmurs rung.
Drench'd by the mounting spray, the Youth reclin'd
Nor reck'd the pelting storm; his fever'd mind
A fiercer tempest own'd. Matilda's name
Oft from his lips, midst bursts of transport, came.
Where now those flatt'ring dreams of bliss, which late
In brighest hues array'd his future fate?
Alas! in vain his erring reason strove
To doubt the dread reverse, that wreck'd his love.

Th' enchantress Hope her seraph smile withdrew,
And hideous phantoms scowl'd upon his view.
What tho', with anxious warmth, the grateful Sire
Laugh'd at his fears, and bade all doubts retire,
His was no selfish heart; its inmost core
Was Beauty's slave, but priz'd her glory more.
E'en now, when desolation swept his frame,
No murm'ring plaint profan'd Matilda's name.
Yet tho' his soul, firm as the wave-lash'd rock,
Calm and unmov'd, defy'd the fatal shock,
Could Nature, like the trembling leaf that knows,
Sport of the gentlest zephyr, no repose,
Such dread reverse without one pang sustain?
O'er Nature's tears e'en Reason bends with pain.
The friendless Exile doom'd from home to part,
Slow lingers round its bow'rs with bleeding heart,
Like our first Sire, from smiling Eden driv'n,
To brave an unknown world and all the wrath of Heav'n.
Mark the pale statue on yon upland brow,
How his eyes drink the bosom'd vale below
That shrines his home! a few short moments o'er,
Ne'er shall he feel its sweet enchantment more.

O, could stern Honour, with disdainful smile,
Mock the last dream that sooth'd his heart awhile!
Again, for life preserv'd and safety won,
The grateful Father hail'd his future Son;
Crush'd ev'ry doubt, of pure affection born,
Lest his bold suit should rouse Matilda's scorn.
Yes, doubly dear his native tow'rs would prove,
Their lonely gloom illum'd by wedded love.

Wake, thou lost slave to perishable earth!
Think of thy soul! assert its heav'nly birth.
Heav'n is its home: this world shall pass away—
On her thou lov'st, the batt'ning worm shall prey.
Think of thy soul, awake! the warning sound
Swept o'er his ear, with awe portentous crown'd.
Dim thro' the gloom some parting shape he sees,
Whose snowy skirts stream flutt'ring to the breeze,
Scarce seen, ere lost. A momentary blaze
Bares Heav'n and earth: again his shrinking gaze
Caught the dim less'ning form, that seem'd to sail,
With outspread pinions, on the stormy gale.

One dread idea master'd all his soul,
And Reason yielded to the stern control.
The cup of life no sweet ingredient knew,
Now Heav'n itself its watchful care withdrew.
E'en now, too late reveal'd to mortal sight,
His guardian Angel soars to realms of light.
Recall'd by Heav'n, he seeks his native skies;
Yet pours his parting blessing as he flies.
Chill grew his shudd'ring heart; he stood aghast!
His hurry'd accents mingled with the blast.
" Return, return, your wonted ægis spread,
" Ere vengeance strike my woe-devoted head!
" Fountain of mercy! yet thy wrath suspend;
" Wean me from earth, for here I have no friend.
" Whate'er thou will'st, resign'd I will obey,
" Nor shall one murmur discontent betray."
He ceas'd; soft gliding o'er his humbled breast,
A calm unwonted shed its tranquil rest.
No more the wild winds flung their rage abroad,
But, whisp'ring, seem'd to own a present God.
The world, its pomp, all faded from his sight,
And Heav'n's own sunshine chas'd his mental night.

O, that such calm should boast a transient reign!
Man heeds it not, or woos its stay in vain.
Lost in life's ceaseless whirl, he pants for rest:
Proud fool! he will not, tho' he may be blest.
'Tis Fancy's mock'ry, or some notes of woe
That faintly mingle with the surge below,
Float on the air: anon the distant cry
Less questionable comes. With straining eye
As if 'twould pierce the gloom, and waken'd ear,
Erect he stands. Dim scatter'd lights appear
Quick glancing to and fro, as tost around
By midnight Bacchanals, with frantic bound.
Sudden, midst echoing shouts, Matilda's name
Loud and yet louder thrill'd his startled frame.
Where now that dream of visionary rest,
That hallow'd calm, with heav'n's own seal imprest?
Some shape, whose streaming robe betray'd its flight,
Swept headlong by—"Stay, phantom of the night!
"Who, and whence art thou? good or ill betide,
"I'll wrest thy purpose." Ere he reach'd its side,
The vision turn'd abrupt. "'Tis thee I seek!
"Where is my Child? degenerate traitor, speak!

" I gave thee welcome, shelter, nought denied—
" I deem'd thy soul to Honour's self allied—
" Give back my Child—my bursting heart relieve—
" And I will bless thee still, and all forgive!"
" Thy Child—Matilda! by yon Heav'n I swear,
" That wretch shall rue the deed, that madly dare
" Insult so pure a shrine! 'tis mine to aid
" And bare at duty's call a stainless blade.
" 'Tis Knighthood's birthright: this wide world in vain
" Could tempt one erring thought—but haste, explain
" Thy fears—I left her in thy shelt'ring arms
" Embracing and embrac'd—thy fierce alarms
" I share— to snatch her from impending woe
" I'd dare the worst, were all mankind my foe,
" Or fall a cheerful martyr." " Fly, pursue—"
Exclaim'd the breathless dame, " I deem thee true—
" O, be Matilda's Knight! thy destin'd bride
" Is ravish'd from thy arms—On ev'ry side
" Our bold retainers, each with torch in hand,
" Explore, with patient toil, the midnight strand.
" But see, the lights, late scatter'd far apart,
" Now glare collected close. My panting heart

"Forebodes some dread mischance." The awe-struck Knight
Pursu'd the fear-wing'd wretch, whose maniac flight
Ceas'd not, till midst the clust'ring crowd she fell
Pale, prostrate, motionless: loud outcries swell
Tumultuous, as the streaming fires betray
The high-born dame. "Was there no meaner prey,
"Insatiate grave!" cried Malcolm, "one short hour
"The Mother and the Child! birth, beauty, pow'r,
"So sudden swept away!" "awhile forbear,
"Good Malcolm! said the Knight, bid gently bear
"Where timely aid, if God so will, may save,
"Awake suspended life, and disappoint the grave."
'Twas done: in silence o'er the illumin'd strand
With their lov'd burthen, move the duteous band.

Hither, ye envious few! awhile survey
This scene, then turn with alter'd hearts away.
No more with reason and yourselves at strife,
Unmurm'ring scan the varied walks of life.
'Tis not o'er pomp that wakes the jealous sigh,
Where loves Content to pour its cloudless sky.

'Tis the proud pile that lifts the aspiring head,
Tempts the red bolt that spares the humbler shed.
The buoyant feather dances on the wave
That shrouds the pearl in Ocean's deepest cave.
Here Death, in mock'ry of human pride,
Proclaims the truth and rends the veil aside.
Look at that brow, ye deem'd devoid of care,
And trace the with'ring fingers of despair!
Mark the fixt stare, clench'd hands, the blood stain'd vest,
The matted locks--and hush your plaints to rest.
Well may ye thankful hug your lowly state,
And bless the Pow'r, that never made ye great!

Beside the gorgeous couch, ah! little meant
For woe like this, the Leech, with gaze intent,
Officious stands. The impatient husband near
Scans his grave look, with mingled hope and fear.
Like one awaken'd in a world unknown,
She stares bewilder'd round: a lengthen'd groan,
As Memory's vision glides terrific by,
Speaks inward agony. With frantic cry,

" Tear them apart! there 's horror in that kiss!
" It must not, cannot be—a sight like this
" Bids angels weep, while Hell stands laughing near!
" Far as the poles asunder, they must wear
" Their lives away—heed not her scream—my ear
" Is callous to the sound, nor stains one tear
" This cheek of mine. Tis from her grave alone
" My peace must come, or peace can ne'er be known!"
Backward she sank: a solemn pause ensu'd,
And each in deep amaze his neighbour view'd.
De Clifford wav'd his hand—in silent grief
The household train obey'd the embarrass'd Chief.
As Malcolm turn'd to gaze, his look of woe
She caught, she beckon'd, and in murmurs low,
" Malcolm, I fear but thee—my life, my fame,
" Rest in thy hands—betray not thou my shame—
" All may be well!" Soft as when infants sleep,
Her slumbers seem'd; her gentle breathings keep
An even pace, and from her alter'd brow
The fierce convulsive storm, subsiding slow,
Sinks to repose; but in the Chieftain's eye
Low'rs dark mistrust. Some fearful mystery

Hangs on her lips, and in the husband's ear
Suspicion breathes. O what a lesson here
For self-deluding man! his guilty schemes
In the deep dungeon of his heart, he deems
Securely lock'd. Vain hope! imprison'd there
Lurks a small voice, that ceaseless cries, "beware!"
Embitt'ring ev'ry hour. Mirth's midnight roar
Drowns not that voice: What tho' from shore to shore
He speed! he cannot scape himself—his breast
Shrines the dread gnawing worm, that knows not rest.

"Malcolm! where fiercest rav'd the battle-storm,
"I gaz'd on danger's most appalling form,
"And my firm nerves ne'er trembled—but I feel
"I am a coward now—that strange appeal
"Breath'd from these lips, like voices from the dead,
"Chills me to stone. Would that on Glory's bed
"These eyes had clos'd, ere at De Clifford's name
"Derision point! in thy disorder'd frame
"As in a glass, my destiny I read;
"Disgrace is mine, and life 's a worthless weed."

" Cease, cease, brave Chief! O could I bare my heart,
" There would'st thou learn what pangs thy words impart!
" If I had lov'd thee less, this aged frame
" Had not been thus convuls'd, I prize thy fame
" Dearer than life—It knew nor spot, nor shame,
" Till beauty snar'd thee—Yet that groan forbear,
" Lest from her stupor rous'd, her blasted ear
" Drink my avowal, which no human pow'r
" Had wrested from me, but this awful hour
" Is Heav'n's. It bade the unconscious slumb'rer speak,
" Herald her own dark shame, and blanch a husband's cheek.
" Mysterious change! O may she mercy find
" From Heav'n and thee! meantime prepare thy mind
" For horror!" " Let us hence," exclaim'd the Chief,
" In deepest solitude I'll shroud the grief
" That weeps my buried fame. Haste let us hence!
" I dread to hear, yet sicken with suspense."
Malcolm obeys—and thence retir'd apart,
Bares to the Chieftain's gaze his lab'ring heart.

From that dread converse the distracted Chief
Rush'd wildly forth—his seem'd that hopeless grief
That mock'd the lip of comfort. Wedded love
Now teem'd with poison—never must he prove
Its soothing raptures more! The lapse of years
Tho' steep'd in seas of penitential tears,
Could ne'er efface that blot, whose deep'ning shame
Canker'd his fairest hopes. De Clifford's dame
'Twas once e'en treason to suspect! the tongue
Of ready thousands had repell'd the wrong—
But now! tho' 'twas a wound no time could heal,
Yet deeper, deeper, he was doom'd to feel!
His only Child, whose call for three long years
Of "Father," ne'er had thrill'd his lonely ears,
Whose love e'en now repaid all past alarms,
Murm'ring its sweetest welcome in his arms,
Was lost for ever! scarce his dazzled sight
Gaz'd the fair vision, like a dream of night
It mock'd his baffled hopes! o'er the lov'd clay
'Twas e'en denied to weep, those rites to pay
Affection's last sad office. Wild and deep
Swept the lone torrent, where the dizzy steep

Bridg'd by a faithless pine, high hung in air,
Yawn'd fearful—in that gulf the ill starr'd fair
Met an untimely grave, as, wing'd with fear,
Thro' the night-storm she urg'd her fierce career.
The plunge, the scream, amid the deaf'ning roar
Were lost, " but, doubts," sigh'd Malcolm, " all are o'er!
" E'en to that pine we track'd with ling'ring pain
" Her flying feet—beyond we sought in vain.
" Shudd'ring we mark'd the torrent's furious sweep
" Tearing e'en rocks, to reach the ocean-deep.
" Alas, poor Maid!" the fears his look express'd
All found an echo in the Father's breast.
Appalling conscience cried, " thou, thou, art he
" The murd'rer of thy Child, compell'd to flee
" The arms that should have shelter'd! on thy head
" Rest the lost outcast's doom! thy peace is fled
" For ever!" Terror shook his frame—the sound
Rang ceaseless in his ears—strange shapes around
Point the pale wretch, whom heav'n and earth disown,
Whom demons envy not. With deep-drawn groan
Forth rush'd the Chief—he reach'd the torrent's side,
The grave of all his hopes—the wint'ry tide

Knell'd horror to his heart—its headlong pow'r
A giant's arm had stemm'd not! she, sweet flow'r!
So frail, so gentle! An adventurous few
Urg'd by his shouts their per'lous search renew
With rival zeal—the cold observant eye
Had shudder'd at their daring; he was nigh
That shar'd the toil, and rous'd with burning brain
To mightier efforts! still the work of pain
Went on, while mid the duteous strife, Despair
Slumber'd awhile. What tumult rides the air?
Where crown yon lordly tow'rs the wave wash'd steep
It fitful swells, yet on the walls' wide sweep
No gliding form appears; with sudden leap
The gates wide open spring! a Shape of death
Like sheeted spectre, o'er the dusky heath
Stalks lone and awful; in the midst it stood
And, pointing with white arm the wint'ry flood,
Beckon'd the wilder'd Chief. "Save from high heav'n
"E'en to the denizens of hell is giv'n
"No pow'r to walk the earth! why thus on me
"Rests its fix'd gaze? perchance my Child, of thee

" It comes to speak! again my ling'ring feet
" It seems to chide and shall I fear to meet?"
Their parting Lord the vassals shudd'ring view'd;
They spoke not, mov'd not, but like statues stood
With head and gaze erect—near and more near
The Chief approach'd—amazement stifled fear!
She, whose sweet smile once cheer'd the morn of life,
Stept slow to meet—his wretched guilty wife!
The uncover'd head, the pale sepulchral cheek,
The hollow eye whence gleams unearthly break,
The coarse black robe, whose penitential flow
Fell to her feet which naked peer'd below,
He gaz'd—each wither'd hope, each blasted joy,
And she the cause, in pity's bursting sigh
Were lost. " Much injur'd Lord!" her solemn tone
Thrill'd his rapt ear, " this heart, to all unknown
" Save Heav'n, to thee I bare! my loathsome life
" Would make an angel weep—I was a Wife,
" A Mother, when thy honest suit was prest
" That won me to thy arms—thou know'st the rest—
" Haply my Child, my Julian, still survive
" To curse my birth—they never can forgive!

" Thy curses too I ask—fast let them fall
" Like fiercest hail, I will endure them all,
" For all have I deserv'd! where'er I move,
" 'Tis like a pestilence, o'er those I love
" Scatt'ring despair and death! to thee and thine
" Dread was the hour, that link'd thy fate to mine.
" Art not thou childless? like a blasted tree
" Its pride, its glory, fled! from me, e'en me,
" Outcast of Heav'n, the unnatural death blow sped
" That wreck'd thy hopes; thy lov'd Matilda's dead,
" And with her all thy peace!" the wretched strain
De Clifford heard—he would have sooth'd, but vain
The attempt. " O kindly cease! to earth no more
" My wishes point, till every struggle o'er,
" Within its lap I sleep. My purpose hear,
" Fixt as the unchanging heav'n—nor threat, nor fear,
" Not thy forgiveness, shall in aught avail
" To shake my soul. Swept by the pitiless gale
" Behold the rain-drench'd head, the unsandal'd feet,
" The self-denying robe! E'en thus thy seat
" I quit for ever, and the world my foe,
" Begin my long, long, pilgrimage of woe."

" O sight of horror! part not thus—e'en now
" Thou seem'st akin to death. Can that pale brow
" Brave the wild tempest, or those tender feet
" The merciless flint? When vulgar taunts shall greet
" Thy bleeding track, how will thy proud soul brook
" To be a mark for scorn! the indignant look
" Will then avail thee nought." " E'en this, and more,
" Tho' deep the stab, I'll bear: all pride is o'er,
" Farewell for ever!"
" Stay! if threat, if pray'r,
" If e'en command be vain, yet tell me where
" Thy purpose points!"
" There where thy guileless youth
" Shook hands with horror! Where thy vows of truth
" I like a fiend deceiv'd—that hallow'd pile
" Wash'd by the Loire, whose shrines I dar'd defile
" With lust unhallow'd, shall in deepest gloom
" Shroud me for ever! to that living tomb
" The world's proud laugh can come not—nought I fear
" Of outward pang: alas! 'tis here, e'en here,
" The never-dying worm!" convulsive shook
Her frame. She upwards rais'd one haggard look,

Then groaning turn'd away. Bleak howl'd the storm
Yet on the Pilgrim mov'd; the feeble form,
The painful tread, as o'er the rugged heath
She tott'ring pass'd, with awe-suspended breath
The Chieftain watch'd: "it must not be! O spare
" The farther effort!" forth he sprang—" beware!
" Impede me not!" how resolute her cry
Triumphant over pain! she rais'd on high
A dagger's point: " this, this, shall render vain
" Thy rash attempt—yon barrier gates restrain
" Thy meddling vassals, whose officious zeal
" Had haply brav'd my path: no want I feel
" Of aid from mortal arm—my warning heed—
" O should thy desp'rate aim my course impede,
" Instant I fall a corse!" the glitt'ring blade
She wav'd with maniac grasp— her form betray'd
No weakness now! some supernatural pow'r
Nerv'd the poor Suff'rer for this awful hour.
A moment thus she stood, then gaz'd awhile
With soften'd look, the victim of her guile;
'Twas her last look! the world before her lay,
Despair and death, companion of her way.

The childless Parent, every comfort fled,
In silent horror bow'd the wretched head.
One voice alone could sooth his burning brain,
And whisper peace, that voice he sought in vain,
'Twas hush'd for ever! e'en his lordly seat,
His banner'd halls, whose recollections sweet
Had cheer'd the distant war, a welcome gave
Cold, dark, and cheerless, as the wintry grave.
He starts! on yon far height the Phantom stands,
And wide, as if to greet, her arms expands.
'Twas past—the momentary weakness o'er,
Abrupt she turn'd, the form was seen no more.

END OF BOOK III.

MATILDA.

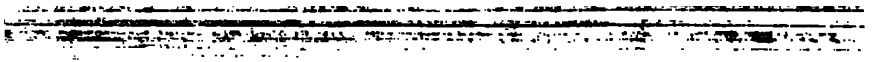
BOOK IV.

PRIDE.

DOES Pride assail thee? tear it from thy heart,
Ere thro' its inmost core the venom dart.
Its smile is link'd with woe; its hug is death;
The Virtues wither near its fatal breath;
Its snare seductive round our Parents twin'd,
And lost the bliss of Eden to mankind.
Still thro' each peopled clime its Idols grew,
And the bold march of crime no limits knew.
Again a jealous God his vengeance hurl'd,
And waves, wide welt'ring, whelm'd a wretched world.
Did He, the Man of sorrows, He who stood
'Twixt thee and bursting wrath, who pour'd his blood

To ransom thee from death, from dazzling throne
Make the blest fount of Life eternal known ?
O, trace him from the manger to the grave,
Then, if thou canst, be still Pride's pamper'd slave !
  Tho' the vast piles, where Egypt's great ones sleep,
Affect the skies, and mock the whirlwind's sweep,
E'en the poor fly, in amber shrin'd, can boast
A tomb more beautiful. His countless host
As Xerxes gaz'd, how soon the haughty brow
Was bow'd with thought, and tears began to flow !
  When first the Franks, by pious Godfrey led,
The holy City won, his kingly head
No circling gold embrac'd. " This Gem," he cried,
" Shall ne'er, too partial friends ! my temples hide,
" Here where a Crown of thorns our Saviour wore,
" And taunts and stripes, with patient meekness bore."
  Illustrious Chief ! beyond this world's control
Soar'd the rich daring of thy godlike soul.
From all its honours, what to thee could spring
More great, more glorious ? thou wert Sion's king !
Nought beyond Sion lay, but Paradise ;
There to new conquests thy ambition flies.

In one short year thou spurn'dst thy earthly reign,
And thy soul rush'd a heav'nly crown to gain.
All that this world could give, thy lot possess'd;
A blessed Lord alone could grant the rest.



MATILDA.

BOOK IV.

YES! there was one, amidst this wreck of woe,
That shar'd, but could not soothe, the bitter blow.
Hard task! with smiles the bursting heart to hide,
And breathe that comfort, to ourselves denied.
Yes! that same shaft, whose desolating flight
Was big with death, plung'd in eternal night
St. Aubyn's sweetest hopes! Matilda's fate
Haunted his every thought. Flee, ere too late,
Lost Youth! those bow'rs that nurse the hopeless sigh,
And lose, in distant war, the days gone by.

Yet, ere an exile from his native shore
Desperate he brave the battle-field once more,
Are there no scenes, that claim his ling'ring feet,
No hearts, that pant their youthful Lord to greet,
No eyes, that long protracted vigils keep
Till eve glooms round, then shiv'ring turn to weep?
Yes, there are ties, whose stern imperious sway
He feels, he owns, yet why this cold delay
When his lov'd home bares her maternal breast,
And lures the wand'rer to its hallow'd rest?
Near the dark cliffs, by northern billows beat,
In lonely pride, rose Eden's castled Seat.
There, amid hermit glens, his youth had past,
O that youth's careless hours could longer last!
Still drank his ear those wild tumultuous cries
That shook the cavern'd strand, his ravish'd eyes
Still gaz'd that flashing tide of helm and mail,
When burst impetuous thro' the deep mouth'd vale
Facing the expanded main, the vassal pride
That own'd his Father's sway—each look defy'd
Danger and death—the banner'd cross on high
They wav'd, and "Sion" was the gath'ring cry.

As near his Sire he rein'd his fiery steed,
Elate with joy, like bird from prison freed,
On the fair Youth the general gaze was cast,
And rapt'rous greetings hail'd him, as he pass'd.
Visions of glory, whither are ye fled?
Speak ye (ye best can tell) ye mighty dead!
While pale Suspense yet lingers on the steep,
In distant graves those holy champions sleep.

Mark o'er yon sands the orphan Warrior glide,
The blooming Page attendant by his side,
Who vainly strives his sorrow to beguile,
With mingled converse, and endearing wile.
O well each circling bay his courser knew,
And loudly neighing, more impatient grew!
Now the deep glen its lone recess display'd,
And Silence brooded o'er the twilight shade.
There on each side, majestically wild,
Half screen'd by giant yews, huge masses pil'd
Rock above rock, the narrow path o'erhung,
Skirting a brawling brook where frequent flung

Lay stretch'd the bridging pine, by hunter feet
Oft crost, while trembling in his close retreat
The antler'd Monarch crouch'd. Each object round
With recollection's sweetest magic crown'd,
Welcom'd the homeward Youth: no answ'ring joy
That thoughtful brow betrays, that restless eye.
Oft as the fitful gust swept rudely past,
He thought strange voices mingled with the blast.
Now female plaints his startled ear assail'd,
Anon his name familiar greetings hail'd.
Dread sounds! those well known tongues, far, far away,
Where hush'd in death. Now shapes of dire dismay
Rush'd scowling by. Scarce Reason could sustain
The wild'ring terrors that beset his brain,
O there are times, when desp'rate sorrows roll,
When on the verge of madness hangs the soul,
A friendly look, a word, comes fraught with pow'r
To lull the anguish of that tort'ring hour,
With angel mildness soothe the mental strife
And gently steal the suff'rer back to life!

Where is that faithful Page whose converse sweet,
The magic of whose smile he turn'd to greet
To calm his fever'd breast? the Youth had stray'd
Unnotic'd from his side. The tangled shade
Searching, a glade of deepest calm he found,
Where many a cypress gloom'd funereal round.
There in the midst a turf-built shrine appear'd,
On which an Urn, of sculpture rude, was rear'd.
Round like a dripping veil, a willow flung
Its slender tresses, and desponding hung.
A sacred text the frail memorial crown'd
That spoke of hope deferr'd, the deep deep wound
It planted in the heart. St. Aubyn's frame
With fierce emotion shook; a Vassal's name
Well known and valued high, was grav'd beneath
By fond affection's hand; affection's wreath
Shall twine that brow no more! on every side
Where the bold jutting rock a space supplied,
Despair's wild fragments meet his shudd'ring view.
One seem'd but newly trac'd.

Another day! thou com'st not yet!
Hope! thy star's for ever set.
I hie me to my widow'd bed,
To tell my babe his Father's dead.

O no! I rave with frenzy wild.
Thou hast not seen, not blest thy Child!
Thou hast not mark'd its cherub smile,
Which might all loss, but thine beguile!

Sometimes, amid my fitful sleep,
I doubt thy truth, what stab so deep?
Thou canst not press another's bed,
I could calmer weep thee dead.

" Full well I knew
" Him whom thou mourn'st, sad wretch! no heart more true
" Ere beat to wedded love. 'Twas by my side
" In battle's hottest press, thy partner died.
" O when thou know'st, that midst the pangs of death
" He fondly bless'd thee with his latest breath,

" 'Twill haply soothe thy grief! here at thy shrine
" Opprest I bend, and mix my tears with thine."
Screen'd by the bow'r, the page apart survey'd
The passing scene; loud bursting sobs betray'd
His close retreat. Fast rain'd the tearful stream
Matting his eyes' dark fringe, their light'ning beam
Quench'd in the gushing show'r. " O wond'rous Youth,
" So young, so rich in gentleness and truth!
" How does thy opening soul new charms reveal,
" And o'er each sense with spell seductive steal.
" But let us hence—ill suit thy tender age
" Life's wintry storms." Sudden the alter'd Page
Starts from his trance; like heav'n's aerial bow,
Amid a cloud of tears, his lifted brow
A bright'ning gleam o'erspread—with buoyant mein
He sprang to greet his Lord. The rugged scene
Expanding grew, soft melting into downs
Whose russet hue the sloping upland crowns.

Whence is that deep ton'd bell whose note profound
Breaks Eve's lone calm? again the ling'ring sound
Dies slowly on the ear. The voice of Fate
Speaks in each pause—haply its mortal date

Of pilgrimage expir'd, some house of clay
The soul exulting quits, and soars away
To worlds unknown! Sweet strains of solemn woe
Hallowing that rite the lot of all below,
Float on the charmed air—the thrilling spell
Bids every pulse with painful rapture swell.
They seem'd not mortal tones! St. Aubyn's soul
Yields unresisting to the soft control.
He deems Matilda's death-chaunt strikes his ears,
And vanquish'd Nature seeks relief in tears.
'Twas now, high peering o'er the gloomy shade
His native tow'rs their battlements display'd.
He sees the turret, in whose airy round
Once rosy dreams his nightly slumbers crown'd.
Whence his shrill horn, that pierc'd the slumb'ring glen,
Rous'd him at dawn; he knew not sorrow then!
At every step how smiles the wide domain
Rich with the sports of youth's unclouded reign!
Now full in view the massive portals rose,
Where languid ivy gloom'd in grim repose.
In the deep fosse that fenc'd the castled seat,
The outer bulwarks bath'd their giant feet.

As thro' the barrier gates he slowly pass'd,
No ready Warder peal'd the joyful blast;
No welcome shouts assembled vassals raise,
But desolation meets his shudd'ring gaze.
Rank noisome weeds, that had no business there,
Spread uncontrol'd where all was once so fair.
No watchful sentinel, with measur'd feet,
Stalks his lone rounds, or friend or foe to greet;
Nor page, nor groom, along the courts appear,
Nor steed, nor stag-hound, wont the scene to cheer.
'Twas like a beauteous form, that lifeless lies,
Whose parted soul has sought its native skies.
Yet there was one, when from his courser's seat
St. Aubyn sprang, that slowly crept to meet.
With wistful look the bold intruder ey'd,
Hung round his steps, then fondly crouch'd beside.
'Twas his lov'd Master's voice, whose well-known sound
Hail'd him by name! he leap'd, with rapt'rous bound,
'Twas all he could, the bland caress to share;
Hence might the selfish world a moral bear!
" Hail venerable halls! once more I tread
" Your hallow'd scenes, and ponder on the dead.

" Hangs not a banner from these storied walls,
" But some sweet vision of the past recalls.
" 'Twas here my pulse first beat at glory's name,
" And tales of Heroes thrill'd my youthful frame.
" Thou faithful Chronicler of ancient lore!
" Liv'st thou, good Betram? when its treasur'd store
" Thy memory pour'd, how drank my greedy ears
" The grateful stream! alternate hopes and fears
" Swell'd at my breast, as our illustrious race
" E'en then, I vow'd, my deeds should ne'er disgrace.
" When last we parted, o'er thy silvery head
" Its kindest frost, a lusty winter shed.
" Haply that fatal shock, that wraps in gloom
" My native bow'rs, has sunk thee to the tomb.
" Peace to thy soul!" A groan burst sudden near
In dread reply: involuntary fear
Bids Selim start, and with unconscious hold
He grasps St. Aubyn's arm. Eve's shadows roll'd
In sullen march along the troubled sky,
And deepen'd all within—nought met the eye
But darkling space. With rising awe imprest,
Bewild'ring thoughts assail the Warrior's breast.

'Twas wild delusion all! with solemn dread
The time-worn banners wave! the mighty dead
Athwart the peopled gloom terrific glide.
E'en the lone harp, whose now neglected pride
Suspended hung, brush'd by their lightsome wings,
In sad prophetic hollow murmers rings!
" Turn, thou last blossom of St. Aubyn's tree!
" List to the awful voice of destiny.
" On death's dark verge I stand—with cloudless light
" The future breaks upon my aching sight.
" Turn, ere too late!" by menial hands convey'd
Sudden a torch flash'd fitful thro' the shade.
In all his gorgeous liv'ry's rich array,
Beneath the banner'd pomp, the aged Bertram lay!
How changed from him, whose brow of lofty pride
And herald trump, St. Aubyn's foes defy'd!
Feebly he lifts his head—in wild amaze
Sprang the pale Chief his dying friend to raise.
Like day's last tint that lingers in the west,
His sunken eyes a parting gleam confess'd.
" My pray'r is heard—'tis thus I wish'd to die;
" Here in thy arms to breathe my latest sigh.

" Here where these trophies soothe my closing hour,
" The proud memorials of St. Aubyn's pow'r!
" Rich was thy house in fame:—its dazzling ray
" Was like the breath of life, my being's stay,
" My world, my all—and must it sink at last?
" Its doom is seal'd and Heav'n's dread fiat past.
" Spare me, thou fearful Vision!" as he spoke
Prophetic fervour fir'd his languid look—
" What sudden light is that, whose dark red blaze
" Shoots from yon cloud? a shape of other days
" There sits enthron'd! That bosom's wound I know,
" So wide, so deep—The eye-balls faintly glow
" Like waning fires—of mountain-mist his vest,
" The stars dim twinkle thro' his shadowy breast.
" How mournful smiles thy Father's thin pale ghost,
" Once, mid the storm of spears, himself a host!
" I see the tear upon his hollow cheek,
" I hear his awful accents feebly break!
" Pass a few years, a Stranger's sordid hand
" Shall rend these walls and spoil a groaning land.
" St. Aubyn's well earned fame, this banner'd scene,
" All, all shall fade, as tho' they ne'er had been!"

He sank exhausted on the Chieftain's breast;
His swimming eyes death's leaden slumber press'd.
" When I lie cold, let no officious care
" This trump, this surcoat, from their master tear!
" Let these lov'd relics share my lowly bed,
" My pride in life, my partner with the dead!"
In breathless horror o'er the lifeless clay
St. Aubyn hung. The sounds of dire dismay
Rang in his ears: he would have question'd more—
The voice was hush'd, its mortal strain was o'er!
Tumultuous cries, the tramp of coming feet
Swell thro' the courts; shrill echoing tongues repeat
St. Aubyn's name. A well-known Monk appears—
'Twas good Anselmo's voice that greets his ears.
" My Son! I strain thee to my breast once more—
" I've pray'd, I've watch'd, till Hope itself was o'er!
" Not I alone, thro' all thy wide domain
" Ring female plaints, that ask relief in vain.
" Scarce do our Chapel echoes know repose,
" By noon-day pray'r assail'd, and midnight woes."
He spoke, when lo! with sad disorder'd mein
A female crowd pour startling o'er the scene.

Silent around their youthful Lord they kneel;
Pale haggard looks their lengthen'd pangs reveal.
And many a child, that ne'er its father knew,
Lifts its clasp'd hands, and cheeks suffus'd with dew.
Well reads the feeling heart that dumb despair;
It breath'd no sigh, yet reign'd expressive there.
Beyond, the Old respectful silence keep;
They came to welcome, but could nought but weep.
" 'Tis Heav'n has will'd," the afflicted Chieftain said,
" Nor tears, nor murmurs, can recall the dead.
" I too have lost my Sire: the hostile strife
" Has snapt the last bright link, that sweeten'd life.
" Yet weep, my friends! together we will mourn
" O'er those, how lov'd, who never shall return.
" E'en he, whose honest worth I long'd to greet,
" Now lies a corse, extended at my feet.
" To you, still many a heart-felt tie remains:
" I stalk, a hermit midst my native plains.
" Unask'd, whate'er my bounty can bestow,
" On you and yours in lib'ral stream shall flow."
Soft as the dews of heav'n, his accents fell;
Each widow'd heart confess'd the soothing spell.

Ill can their lives that selfish zeal atone
That midst his deeper woes obtrudes its own.
With grateful lips they bless'd the pious Chief,
And dawning comfort lull'd their bursting grief.

Not long his heart's first wish that Chief delay'd
To soothe, with solemn rites, his Father's shade
He bade the tomb's funereal honours rise,
And breathing sculpture all its art supplies.
There stretch'd along, in knightly hauberk drest,
The imag'd Chieftain lay; his ample breast
The broider'd surcoat wore; a naked blade
His right hand grasp'd; on stony pillow laid
His helm-clad head reclin'd, and sitting near
A tiny Cherub bent, as in his ear
Whisp'ring the joys of heav'n; his crossing feet
A Lion's side in couchant posture meet.
His limbs a scaly guard with jointed bands
Surrounds, and scaly gauntlets glove his hands.
The studded belt its gorgeous pomp displays,
And Knighthood's proudest boast, the spur his heel arrays.

Whose blazon'd breast with rich memorials shone
Of brave renown, from Paynim conquest won.
That trusty partner midst the storms of life,
Whose faith was tried thro' many a hard-fought strife,
Now, when its barrier strength no more could save,
Swell'd the sad honours of the Warrior's grave.
O'er it, his crested helmet hung display'd,
Its crimson mantlings hack'd by foeman's blade.
The wond'ring vassals scan the pond'rous blow,
And admiration steals a pause from woe.

Within the chantry, rang'd in order due
A solemn glare the gorgeous tapers threw.
There for the sainted dead, by night, by day
The Mass unwearied wing'd its upward way.
O'er the clos'd gates with black funereal hung,
Its gloomy pomp the glitt'ring Scutcheon flung.
The Traveller marks the emblem with a sigh,

These filial rites with due observance wrought,
Back to its cell return'd excursive thought.
There rooted deep, and scorning all control,
One lov'd idea sway'd the vanquish'd soul.
The serious brow, where stern abstraction prey'd,
The wasting form, its tyrant rule betray'd.
When deeds of active mercy crown'd the day,
And Selim went, companion of his way,
Like some good Angel near a Pilgrim's side
To cheer his travel, and his cares divide,
A saintly glow illum'd the Chieftain's heart;
Its source was heav'n, no selfish thoughts had part.
The hallow'd business, like some soothing dream,
Shed o'er his lonely path a transient gleam.
His gentle cares unwonted peace inspir'd,
His precepts strengthen'd, and example fir'd.
Again the hymn of joy, long stranger there,
Rose on the breeze, triumphant o'er despair.
Won from himself, the grateful Chief survey'd
The auspicious change his feeble hand had made.
Not his alone; his Selim's rival zeal
Shar'd the lov'd task, the bleeding wounds to heal.

The startled Mourners with amazement ey'd
The blooming Stranger at St. Aubyn's side.
On his soft accents hung the ravish'd ear,
Their mild persuasion stay'd the bursting tear.
The winning smile, that beam'd attractive grace,
The blush, that deepen'd o'er his sun-dy'd face,
The look, that flash'd unutterable joy
When his Lord's praises thrill'd the doting Boy,
Thro' ev'ry vale admiring murmurs move,
And admiration ripens into love.

Now mark the Chief: the soothing vision dies,
Reflection wakes, and farther peace denies.
In deep dejection plung'd from all apart,
Dark gloomy fancies cluster round his heart.
E'en Selim's artless cares came fraught with pain,
The good Anselmo linger'd near in vain.
There on yon promontory's dizzy steep
Where the wild sea birds, idly clam'ring, sweep,
Where hung on high, the cresset's starry light
Gleams o'er the wave, and cheers the dubious night,

Spite of the wintry blast that rav'd around,
At morn, at eve, the lonely Chief was found.
'Twas not the wat'ry world beneath display'd,
Now cloth'd with terror, now in smiles array'd,
'Twas not the glories of the new-born day,
The milder lustre of its parting ray,
That lur'd the restless wand'rer to the shore,
Alone to gaze, to wonder and adore;
There turns his wistful look, where, dim descry'd,
De Clifford's tow'rs above the ocean-tide
Crown'd Heorta's jutting cape. Lost Chief! beware,
Start from thy dream, 'tis link'd with stern despair!
Tear from that woe-fraught spell thy hopeless gaze,
Nor feed the merciless flame, that inly preys
Mining thy rose of youth. Around thee sweep
Sons of the Cross, aerial shapes, that weep
Thee, their degenerate Son! Their mighty name,
Their proud baronial honours, dear to fame,
Before a day-dream fade. O be no more
Distemper'd Passion's slave! that beauteous flow'r
That smil'd unrivall'd in its native bow'r,

Whose virgin lustre snar'd thy dazzled sight,
Where is it? Morn unveils her dewy light,
Its trace no more is found. Midst coral caves
Haply it blooms anew, in Ocean-caves
Deep bosom'd, and, while sea-nymphs tend around,
Repays their guardian cares, with charms unwonted crown'd.

When from its prison peeps the groaning Soul,
And marks the fearful storms that round it roll,
One with'ring scene of anguish and affright,
And dark as chaos ere the birth of light,
She shrinks appall'd to meet the ills of life,
And calls despair to close the useless strife.
O 'tis a spectacle whose mighty woe
Might bid the angelic host awhile forego
Their rapt'rous visions, when a noble mind
Above its fellows gifted, rais'd, refin'd,
Sinks lost, o'erwhelm'd in pale despondence arms,
Past hope, past cure! In vain the wild alarms
Of fond affection. O'er the dull cold ear
Sweep tones unheeded, once as life-blood dear.

They cannot wake the dead! E'en wedded Love
Weeps the vain task, one conscious thought to move.

In his lone cell, from all but God apart,
The good Anselmo pour'd his anguish'd heart.
Not for himself arose the anxious pray'r,
" Fountain of life, O be our Chief thy care!
" Renew his wasted strength, his faded bloom,
" Nor to despair his weeping vassals doom.
" Let not that eagle, whose advent'rous flight
" Upheld the cross, now sink in endless night!"

Yes, that bold eagle, which thro' fields of gore,
With outstretch'd wings its course triumphant bore,
No more with dauntless aim attempts the skies,
But low with ruffled plumes, and panting bosom lies!
All human art seem'd vain; 'twas Heav'n alone
Could save the Chief, could still the gen'ral groan.
He deem'd the fiat past, whose final doom
Number'd his days, and mark'd him for the tomb.
An awful voice rang ceaseless in his ear,
" Thy race is run; thou must not tarry here!"

Patient he smil'd when all around was woe,
And meekly bow'd to meet the impending blow.
A seraph Form, rob'd in immortal bloom,
Bends from the skies, and beckons him to come.
Low at his feet the dying Herald lies,
While from his lips prophetic horrors rise.
These visionary shapes, by night, by day,
Hang o'er his couch, or haunt his lonely way.

Now Midnight hears his slow distemper'd tread
Creep o'er the slumbers of the cloister'd dead.
In lengthen'd vista thro' the vaulted gloom,
Dim glimm'ring lamps disclose the frequent tomb
Where sleep his warrior Sires; recumbent there
Each sculptur'd Chieftain seems, with soothing care,
To hail the Orphan, of their honour'd line
All that on earth remain'd. From ev'ry shrine
Affection's thrilling murmurs faintly break
And crown the sweet illusion. Who can speak
His soul's enchantment! Does some Seraph's wing
Quick sounding near, celestial odours fling?

Thro' the dim aisle a fleecy brightness steals,
Soft as the gleam the milky path reveals
Powder'd with stars. Amid this sudden light
A Shape unearthly glides upon the sight!
Above his Father's tomb, its snowy hands
Crost o'er the breast, the radiant Vision stands.
He hears his name thrice breath'd; the solemn tone
Arrests each pulse, and chills him into stone.
" Heir of eternal life! awake, awake;
" Wedded to dust, thy wild'ring dream forsake.
" She whom thou vainly mourn'st, a spotless flow'r
" Now blooms transplanted to immortal bow'r.
" Has life no duties? think of him who gave
" Himself, thy ransom from the insatiate grave;
" Whose dying sighs, whose unexampled love,
" Man mock'd rebellious, Angels wept above!
" E'en here, deep plung'd in Superstition's maze,
" Enclos'd by death, a Child of error strays.
" Haste, to his view the page of Christ unroll,
" And snatch from hell's fierce grasp the prison'd soul."
The voice was hush'd; in breathless horror bound
Still knelt the Chief: save the low wailing sound

As thro' the low-brow'd vault the night wind died,
Or mid the dusky pines desponding sigh'd,
'Twas stillness all. Upon his lab'ring brow
Start drops of agony! he deem'd e'en now
The bolt of wrath, commission'd from on high,
Already launch'd. Offended Deity
Harrow'd his soul—'twas now he fear'd to die.
O yet one moment's space, by timely pray'r
To stay that wrath! his scream of wild despair
Rings thro' the vaults, his pulse forgets to play,
And rapt in deathlike sleep, the exhausted Victim lay.

O 'twas a fearful night! the awful blast
In deaf'ning shouts along the mountains pass'd.
Before its march, all nature reel'd forlorn;
The giant pine, its mighty roots uptorn,
Roll'd thund'ring down the crag's precipitous side
Bridging the narrow vale. In sheeted tide
The headlong torrent spouted from on high;
And save when shooting thro' the troubled sky
Portentous meteors stream'd, at God's command
Scarce thicker darkness gloom'd o'er Egypt's land.

Now quak'd the stoutest heart, o'erwhelm'd with dread!
The Mother started from her widow'd bed,
Listing the pealing yell with terror wild,
And closer to her bosom strain'd her child.
'Twas like the crashing of a parted world,
Heav'd from its base, in shatter'd fragments hurl'd.
'Twas said, high perch'd upon the topmost tow'r,
The bird of death, at that appalling hour
Scream'd ominous, and clasp'd its dusky wing
Exulting in the din, nor ceas'd to fling
Its boding terrors till the storm was hush'd,
And infant morn along the Ocean blush'd.
That scream was heard amid the enthusiast cry
When stream'd Jehovah's banner to the sky,
When round their warrior Chief, the vassal pow'r
Turn'd from the pleading look, the native bow'r!
While Age in close debate throng'd awe-struck round,
And shook the serious brow, the woe-fraught sound
Stay'd not the impatient tide, that roll'd beneath
To glut, in distant climes, the rav'nous jaws of death.

Thro' the rich storied panes, Morn's bashful smile
Faint peering, steals along the shadowy aisle.
Its gradual march athwart the cloister'd gloom,
Tints the pale forms, that crown the sculptur'd tomb.
But where is he, on stony pavement cast,
O'er whom unheeded swept the midnight blast?
Scarce o'er each darken'd sense, its dawning ray
Had Reason flung, and bade the life-pulse play,
The Chief, his wonder yet chastis'd by dread,
Gaz'd slowly round—the unearthly Shape was fled,
And all was gloom. Soft on the distant air
Delicious music swell'd; his stern despair
The oblivious spell confess'd. Why, jealous Night,
Drown with thy ruder breath, thy wild affright,
The soothing witch'ry? bid thy mutt'ring train
Speed to their caves, that mar thy silent reign.
'Twas now the sun of peace within enshrin'd
Illum'd its noblest throne, the contrite mind.
Speak ye! who walk'd companion of despair,
Doom'd sad reverse, and looks estrang'd to bear,
When to one friend, midst worldly pomp forgot,
Ye turn'd repentant, and bewail'd your lot,

Felt not your heart, its dream of folly o'er,
A holy calm, its pulse ne'er knew before?
The parting tempest dies along the air;
Did Mercy's voice, as soar'd the impassion'd pray'r,
Speak the rude din to peace? O nought more sweet
Than the heart's incense can our Maker greet!

'Twas morn. What guardian care unseen, unknown,
Has watch'd the unconscious Chief, and o'er him thrown
A mantle's warmth, o'er which Night's chilling tears
Fell harmless? soon a still small voice he hears—
" O wondrous Boy! thus watchful at my side;
" My Selim, how thy silent duties glide
" Healing my wasted heart! thy gentle care
" Binds me to life. Thou bidst existence wear
" A charm, that sweetly soothes its rugged road.
" O that our faith from one blest fountain flow'd!
" 'Twould link our souls on earth with closer tie,
" Nor can death part the sons of Christ on high.
" O could my zeal thy veil of blindness rend,
" Lead thee to Christ, and bid thy errors end!

" Wake from thy fatal dream, and dare to live!
" A God of mercy calls, impatient to forgive."
" Lead, gracious Chief!" exclaim'd the trembling Youth,
" Where flows the fountain of eternal truth.
" Thro' thee, thro' thee, salvation comes more sweet.
" Lead on! I follow with repentant feet."
St. Aubyn heard; he sprang with shout of joy
In his fond arms to fold the blooming Boy.
His warm embrace with equal warmth was met;
Their souls appear'd to mingle, to forget
All, save that little world their union made;
O'er the lov'd Youth upon his bosom laid
Entranc'd he hung. Each wild luxuriant grace
Which oft his wond'ring sight had paus'd to trace,
Unwonted witch'ry wore; his eye's dark beam
Robb'd of its darting fire, a dewy gleam
Of melting languor sheds; its glances speak
Mysterious eloquence: the burning cheek
Deepens with blushes, while the crimson vest
Heaves wild responses to his panting breast.

Soft murmurs, wafted to the Chieftain's ear,
" O may we never part! for here, e'en here
" Is all my heav'n, I ask, I hope no more,"
Speed to his heart, and thrill its inmost core.
" Blest Truth!" he cried, " from thee these raptures flow;
" How vast thy triumph! nought is wanting now.
" E'en when my sins the chast'ning rod provoke,
" Eternal justice lingers on the stroke,
" And crowns me with a mission thus divine,
" To lead this orphan Wand'rer to thy shrine:
" I live anew, the mists of error flee—
" My all of life, I grateful vow to thee."
A Form glides dim to view. " 'Tis he, 'tis he!
" Father! our eager wishes point to thee.
" Haste, in Christ's chosen flock this Youth enroll,
" And cleanse in Truth's pure wave the darken'd soul."
Why stands the Monk with look intensely pale,
While pour'd the enthusiast Chief his rapid tale,
And, with the transport ransom'd sinners prove,
Dwelt on the wonders of Eternal love?
" My Son!" he cried with tears but ill suppress,
And all the Father swelling at his breast,

" Can I unmov'd thy alter'd mein survey,
" From which so late I shudd'ring turn'd away ?
" I mark the elastic mind with kindling flame
" Light the dim eye, and nerve the enfeebled frame.
" Warm from thy lips a new-born language breaks;
" It clings to life, of hopes reviv'd it speaks.
" More fruitful still of gratitude and joy,
" Thro' thee has Heav'n reclaim'd this erring Boy.
" Rous'd at the call, I see thy panting soul
" Shake off its trance, and scan the destin'd goal.
" In action Virtue lives; nor pause, nor rest
" Her labours know; in blessing others, blest.
" Rouse thee, St. Aubyn! on the morning gale
" Ride bitter tidings. Age will list the tale,
" Glance at the pow'rless arm, and heave the sigh
" Desponding. Youth with fiercely-flashing eye
" Will thirst for vengeance, and indignant spring
" To burst the fetters of a prison'd King.
" In distant tow'r the captive Richard lies;
" To thee, to all, he turns with anxious eyes!
" Arise, be foremost! bid thy eagle plume
" Its drooping wings; the hour of trial 's come."

What means the frantic laugh, the scream of joy,
For such it seem'd, that 'scap'd the alter'd Boy?
Mysterious rapture fires his sparkling eyes;
'Twas quickly past: with look abash'd he flies,
Where thro' the aisle, with silent horror pale,
The Chief pac'd, brooding o'er the eventful tale.
Anon with loftier port the Hero strode,
His heart with proudest recollections glow'd,
As all his warrior Sires around him laid,
Their richly blazon'd shields on high display'd,
Arrest his gaze. They speak of glories past,
With voice resistless as the whirlwind's blast.
Such voice might wake the dead! the dread appeal
He own'd, he felt, but where his trusty steel?
His better arm, slow from his naked thigh
Fell powerless. While confusion's humbling sigh
Swell'd at his breast, an outstretch'd arm supply'd
The long-neglected partner of his side.
'Twas his lov'd Selim, that with beaming eyes
Knelt at his feet, and wav'd the glitt'ring prize!
The impatient Chieftain bar'd the sacred blade,
And the bright mirror with a smile survey'd.

" Shades of my Fathers! O, awhile suspend
" Your hymns of ecstacy, and earthward bend.
" Nerve my weak frame with more than mortal pow'r;
" Breathe your own spirit o'er me. 'Tis the hour
" Of fearful daring! 'Tis the cause of Heav'n:
" Who shall deny that cause and hope to be forgiv'n?
" Enfeebl'd by despair, a Phantom's slave,
" Thou saw'st me droop, Anselmo, to the grave;
" Thou saw'st my frame with inward fires decay,
" And fell Perdition mark'd me for its prey.
" The fatal dream is past; the sable plume
" Again its crested station shall resume;
" Again our Eagle, with triumphant flight,
" Soar to the skies, and mock the envious sight!
" Yet Father! ere to burst a Sovereign's chains
" Duteous I quit once more my native plains,
" O, let the assembled gaze this Youth behold
" By thee midst Jesus' chosen band enroll'd."
When sheath'd in arms, like vision from the dead,
Walk'd forth the Chief, how swift the tidings spread!
Successive throngs the rapt'rous shout renew'd,
And smil'd, and wept, and wonder'd as they view'd.

One Eve, nor nam'd the Chief a distant day,
Winding o'er hill and dale in long array,
Pour'd eager crowds, to mark the hallow'd rite
When Mercy welcom'd 'mongst the sons of light
An erring Brother. Soon, expanded wide,
The Chapel gates receiv'd the rolling tide.

The storied panes that fac'd the orient beam,
Cast o'er the scene a dim religious gleam.
There stood Anselmo: round his naked head
Bright lambent rays their mingled colours shed.
He seem'd from other worlds! the breathless throng
Hang on the thrilling magic of his tongue.
The widow'd wife, the childless parent, hear
And resignation checks the starting tear.
They gaze the lifted Cross in silent pray'r,
And learn composure from the image there.
" Come forth," at length he cried, " thou gentle Youth!
" Approach the altar of Eternal truth!
" 'Tis heav'n inspir'd thy heart: its dawning light
" Has chas'd the darkness of thy mental night.

" Long hast thou stray'd, by hell-born meteors led,
" The slave of fraud, companion of the dead!
" Come, in Christ's healing fount thy errors lave,
" For who but He, omnipotent to save?"
With haste impetuous thro' the awe-struck train
Rush'd Selim forth; before the hallow'd fane
Prostrate he fell with pale disorder'd look,
And all his frame with fierce emotion shook.
The Man of God the struggling Youth survey'd
With mute surprise; soon gentle pity sway'd.
He deem'd the blissful change inspir'd his soul
With swelling raptures, that defy'd control.

Solemn and slow the mystic rite began,
The pledge of mercy to repentant man.
" Tho' sins of deepest dye thy heart o'erflow,
" This healing wave shall wash thee, white as snow.
" O thou, who pant'st the Christian's hope to share,
" Become of immortality the heir!
" Upon thy brow I print the blessed sign,
" The Cross, where died our Saviour, where died thine."

Along the fretted roof soft music rose,
And, " Brother, hail!" was heard at ev'ry close.
Thro' each dim aisle a holy transport flies,
Lifts the clasp'd hands, and glistens in the eyes.
Yet, fixt as marble at the sainted shrine
Knelt the rapt convert! no responsive sign
Greeted with conscious smile the circling crowd
That on his brow the kiss of peace bestow'd.
" My brother too! how fades all earth-born fame
" Before this scene!" Thro' all his panting frame
Thrills the lov'd voice; his listless langour flies
As on St. Aubyn rest his kindling eyes.
" My honour'd Lord! to heav'n, yet more to thee
" This change is due. Thy God is mine: may he
" Grant my first pray'r: O be it Selim's fate
" To merit all thy praise, he could not bear thy hate!"
" Cease, cease, fond Youth! thy anxious fears compose;
" Ne'er shall thy love, which still increasing grows,
" Be thrown on thankless soil; its soothing sway
" Of half its sorrows robs life's clouded day.
" No parent now survives, but thou to me
" No longer page, shalt henceforth brother be.

" Let this embrace my eager faith confess,
" And may our God the auspicious union bless!"

Sleep's Heav'n's avenging wrath ? its shrines profan'd,
Its solemn rites by sordid passions stain'd !
There kneels Hypocrisy with down cast eye,
And dares with lying lips that wrath defy ;
Yet all around Heav'n breathes its own serene,
And Day's departing glories gild the scene.

Yet there were some, by age more cautious made,
That with distrust the stranger Youth survey'd ;
Mark'd with suspicious ken the winning smile,
And deem'd his artless mein the cloak of guile.
Once, when that Youth, in solitude apart,
Bar'd undisguis'd the secrets of his heart,
Dark fearful sounds the shudd'ring ear appall'd !
'Twas not on Jesus' name the Suppliant call'd !
Thrice from his lips the name of Alla broke,
And a strange transport fir'd his alter'd look.
Such was the rumour. Some with smiles receiv'd
The whisper'd calumny, but none believ'd.

Yet should at times some wav'ring doubts arise,
One hasty glance dispel'd the unjust surmise.
Witness those heart-breath'd blessings that pursu'd
His daily task, the bliss of doing good.
O could that form enshrine a soul of Sin ?
All radiant heav'n without, all hell within!
That soul seem'd guiltless, as an infant's sigh,
Suspicion here were gross impiety.

Past were the heavy hours ; the earth-ward eyes
Beam with new hopes, and gaze erect the skies.
The awaken'd Chief the port of war resumes,
And health sits smiling on his raven plumes.
Swift from his brow Death's livid hue retires,
And new-born vigour all his frame inspires.
Now from its torpid dream, with outspread wings,
More sternly terrible the Eagle springs.
Yet ere from home, at duty's call, he part,
Thoughts of deep import gather round his heart.
Once, as at dawn the rampart's lofty brow
Slowly he pac'd, and gaz'd the expanse below,

Sudden of horn and hound, the mingled swell
Rose from beneath! hill, vale, and tangled dell,
Join'd the wild chorus; well that form he knew
His hunter-vest impearl'd with morning dew,
That near the verge of yon impending brow
Cheers his hot steed, nor heeds the depth below.
Long had that steed defy'd the galling rein,
And strength and skill combin'd their arts in vain;
Now foil'd in turn, obedient to command,
He owns the master-pow'r of Selim's hand.
" Thou lov'd adopted brother!" sigh'd the Chief,
" At once the source of mingled joy and grief,
" O should I perish in the coming strife,
" How wilt thou stem the rugged surge of life?
" The unfeeling taunt, the scowl of pamper'd pride,
" And pining want, will scare on ev'ry side.
" Who then shall heed thy tears?" With sudden glow,
" With me, with me it rests—this bitter blow
" Shall yet be spar'd thee—mine the will, the pow'r,
" To shield thee from that dark and stormy hour.

" O thou wert sent a blessing from above
" To share my lonely wand'rings! with thy love
" A something holy mingles. Shall I prove
" Ungrateful to my God? that liberal store
" His bounty gave, on thee this hand shall pour;
" And when I fall, the oblivious grave my bed,
" Thy worth new lustre o'er these tow'rs shall shed!"
Fir'd with the glowing theme, how trivial seem'd
All earth-born business else! himself he deem'd
The almoner of heav'n, that heav'n look'd down
Well pleas'd, on charity so like its own.
Rumour's ten thousand tongues the deed proclaim,
And hail St. Aubyn's heir with loud acclaim.
Tho' call'd from chill obscurity to share
The warmth and splendour of the midday glare,
So meek the stranger Youth his honours wore,
The jealous scowl which pining Envy wore,
(For at the heel of Merit Envy glides
True as its shadow,) to a smile subsides.
Such is the charm that robes the modest brow
With pow'r, resistless as the Parthian bow

That wounds retiring. Near the assembled crowd
That pour'd their gratulations long and loud,
Lingers an aged Seer, whose locks of white
But thinly shade his front. A baleful light
Shoots from his gleamy eyes; the gen'ral joy
He hears, but shares not: on the stranger Boy
The idol of the hour, he glares intense,
And, "hence," he cries, "thou foul impostor, hence!
"The God of Christians sleeps not: o'er thy head
"His fiercest terrors hang; from wrath so dread
"Shall Alla shield thee? ere the death-bolt fall,
"Thy shallow Prophet to thy rescue call.
"And thou, lost Chief! while yet the pow'r be thine,
"Burst the dread toils of death that round thee twine.
"Hence with that fiend of hell, that Pagan Youth!
"He smiles to snare thy unsuspecting truth.
"He hears, he trembles, mark his guilty start!
"My words strike terror to his conscious heart."
'Twas but a moment's space; scarce seen, ere lost,
Light as a Summer cloud, a shadow cross'd
The Stripling's brow; 'twas but a moment's space,
One bright unsullied noon illum'd his face,

Falsehood ne'er look'd so lovely. " Chief, awake!
" Thy dream is death; quick from thy bosom shake
" That fawning serpent! O, by all thy Sires,
" (Would that my tongue could boast its wonted fires)
" By all the illustrious dead my warning heed!
" Few can my years, but none my love exceed.
" Has Bertram died in vain?" At that dread name
A sudden shiv'ring swept St. Aubyn's frame.
His senses reel; half hid in misty shroud
Flits a pale Phantom by, and cries aloud,
Pointing the adopted Youth, " lost Chief, beware!"
They were not strange, that form, that voice, that hair!
The hand, whose clasping warmth entwin'd his own,
Shudd'ring he shook aside: the voice, whose tone
So late discours'd sweet music, on his ear
Now grated harsh. The wild appeal, the tear
Were eloquent in vain. What mortal wight
Shall dare the warning of the dead to slight?

As thus in breathless agony he stood,
And the rapt crowd in dumb amazement view'd,

A steed's shrill tramp, the bugle's pealing sound,
Broke the deep pause, and rous'd inquiry round.
A way-worn Page, by Pudsey's high command,
Summon'd the Barons of Dunelmia's land,
To quench at Duty's shrine the torch of hate,
And scan with serious brow their Sovereign's fate,
Who far away in captive fetters mourn'd,
And with imploring eyes to England turn'd.
The Chieftain heard; his brain's wild phantom fled;
The absorbing truth one deep emotion spread.
High swell'd his heart, as burst his answ'ring cry,
" I come, I come! O dead to Chivalry,
" His country's scorn! whose dull unalter'd eye,
" Could gaze his King, like meanest slave revil'd,
" His sacred limbs by galling bonds defil'd.
" Leap forth, my sword, the imperious call to meet!
" Ne'er shall the morrow chide my truant feet."
Yet had he not, by fierce delirium wrung,
Spurn'd the lov'd Boy, that weeping round him clung?
Had he not sworn, and Heav'n enroll'd the vow,
To shield his helpless years? that oath where now!

Chill'd with remorse, he turn'd with falt'ring tongue,
" My Brother! O forgive the ungrateful wrong
" By frenzy's self inspir'd; let this embrace
" Prove my repentance, and the past efface.
" Oft shall my heart midst War's tempestuous sea,
" With anxious fondness turn to home and thee."
" Sue not to me!" the impassion'd Trembler cries,
" Thou lov'st me still, and recollection dies.
" Yet hear my firm resolve; whate'er betide,
" No toil, no peril shall our paths divide.
" With thee, Fate's keenest malice I defy;
" I know no safety, save when thou art nigh!
" Apart from thee, thy voice, this sweet domain,
" War and its horrors plead my stay in vain.
" O, if a Brother's wish in vain control,
" All else were weak to shake my steadfast soul!"

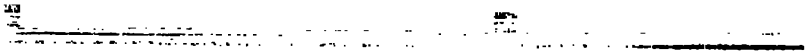
Fast o'er a wearied world Night's mantle fell;
The Chief still linger'd in Anselmo's cell.
While its soft balm endearing converse shed,
They deem'd the silent hours too quickly fled.

From the Sire's lips tho' resignation part,
His falt'ring speech betray'd the rebel heart;
And oft he paus'd, opprest with anxious thought,
For Nature triumph'd o'er the truths he taught.
" But see, my Son! Morn trembles o'er the tide;
" Stern duty calls, and will not be deny'd.
" Soon must we part;—these eyes are dim with age;
" My book of life presents its closing page.
" But thou, ere summon'd from this nether sphere,
" Full be thy years, and glorious thy career!
" There may we meet again!" A sudden shout
Rose on the wings of morning from without.
Anon the cheerful horn, whose mellow tone
Well knew each tangled dell, and covert lone,
Swell'd to the ear—" 'tis he," St. Aubyn cries,
" My gallant Brother all fatigue defies.
" His buoyant soul anticipates the day;
" Again that warning shout reproves delay!"
" Would that he tarried here," Anselmo said,
" That daring spirit chills my heart with dread;
" It tow'rs above his years—the hunter's vest
" Beseems him more than war's terrific crest.

" Do thou, my Son, (he lives but in thy sight,)
" Curb his too eager bearing in the fight.
" And O, if pray'rs avail, thy Father's seat
" Again shall welcome thy victorious feet!"

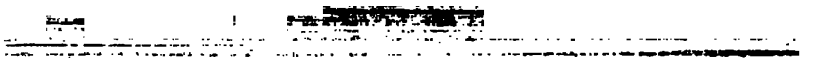
As o'er the upland downs, that from the tide
Receding, rose in solitary pride,
Slow wind the steeds, the wistful Sire pursu'd
Their fading track; a dreadful solitude
Chill'd his warm heart. The staff that propt his age,
All that could cheer life's closing pilgrimage,
For ever gone! shudd'ring, he turn'd away,
Sought his lone cell, to meditate, and pray.
If not to pray'r, when earthly comforts cease,
O! where shall hapless man resort for peace!

END OF BOOK IV.



MATILDA.

BOOK V.



ARABIA.

LAND of the naked rock, the howling waste!
I lift the veil that shrouds thy glories past.
E'en since the deluge whelm'd a guilty land,
Has Independence walk'd thy burning sand.
Still pure, unmix'd, thy ancient race remains,
Ne'er bow'd thy neck, opprest with servile chains.
Well did the Angel-voice thy fate foretell,
" Thou, Ishmael, thou shalt be invincible!
" Arm'd with thy bow, in wildest freedom rove,
" And, nurs'd in hatred, war eternal prove."
Tho' oft domestic strife thy bosom tear,
Thy Sons unite, when foreign foes appear.

If conquest fail, yet safety smiles behind ;
Their Camel hordes are swifter than the wind.
Patient of toil, where thirst and famine dwell,
They scent, with instinct sure, the distant well.
Where trackless deserts roll their sandy tide
The vanquish'd plunge, the heav'nly orbs their guide.
Their nightly march they steer by these alone,
Their name, their change, by use familiar grown.
Where now their foes, that swept with desp'rate haste ?
They toil, in silent horror, o'er the waste !
The legions vanish, burning sands their tomb,
Till not a spectre stalk across the gloom !

Yet oft thy lawless Chiefs the bard approve,
And drink with sullen joy the theme they love.
The fierce Bedween, unknowing how to spare,
Drops the red lance, and lists the melting snare.
His all of leisure is to this resign'd ;
But chief, at eve, the circling tribe reclin'd
Beside their tents that black'ning dot the plain,
While with crost legs the frequent tube they drain,

Yield unresisting to the sweet control,
In all the listless vacancy of soul.
Round watch the trusty dogs, a guardian band,
And their fleet mares in ready harness stand.
Love's hair-breadth 'scapes, the Courser's lightning speed,
The baffled foe, the wild adventurous deed,
Such were the themes, whose still renew'd delight
Hush'd the rude throng, and charm'd the ling'ring night.
But when the song a bolder flight pursued,
That noblest luxury of doing good,
And hail'd the godlike faith, thro' ages tried,
The Arab's practice, and the Arab's pride,
Each sun-dy'd cheek with conscious triumph glows,
Each lawless pulse in gentler current glows;
The salt of life the trembling Captive tastes,
His pledge of safety o'er the robber-wastes.

On Mem'ry's buoyant wing I trembling rise,
And, stretch'd beneath, thy varied bosom lies.
I mark the wilds, by wand'ring Israel trod,
Whose lonely scenes confess'd the present God.

Methinks I see the late rebellious band
Round Sinai's base, in pale amazement stand.
Thick clouds of darkness veil its sacred head,
And darting flames mysterious horror shed.
In bursting peals, the thunder shouts around;
The mystic trumpet flings its deaf'ning sound.
Well may'st thou tremble, Sinai! on thy breast
The God of Gods descends, a fearful guest.
Loud and more loud the mingled roar appalls;
Favor'd of Heav'n! on thee Jehovah calls.
The shudd'ring gaze pursues thy slow ascent,
And ev'ry sinking knee with awe is bent.
Thou near'st the cloud! it hides thee in its breast!
Imagination fails to paint the rest.

O, Mount of blest renown when Time was young,
And still, from age to age, the theme of song!
E'en now, tho' past those scenes of solemn dread,
And Desolation walk thy naked head,
Awe-struck I gaze. By distance made more sweet,
My ravish'd ears slow chaunting voices greet.

Whence are those sounds now pausing, now renew'd,
Hymning the God in wildest solitude?
Here no fair vales their emerald bosoms spread,
No twilight shades delicious coolness shed;
Here blush no roseate bow'rs, no villas rise,
The blasted soil a scanty boon denies.
Is it some Angel-band, that harping keep
Their sacred watch on Sinai's rugged steep?
'Tis from that convent's solitary pile
Swells the deep chaunt. E'en there the sainted smile,
The heart devote to God, their incense shed,
Pregnant with life, tho' all around be dead.

O Israel! as from Egypt's galling land
We trace thy steps to Jordan's willowy strand,
When forty years thy desert wand'rings told,
Nor swell'd thy foot, nor wax'd thy garment old,
How like thy restless scenes of houseless woe,
Our fitful span, our pilgrimage below!
Some sunny spots illume our darkling way,
Sweet as the wells where Elim's palm trees play.

Traitors to God, when danger's storm be past,
We spurn the voice, that hush'd the awful blast.
Panting we strive, midst life's tempestuous main,
Some isle of visionary bliss to gain;
Thoughtless we revel in eternal day,
Nor reck impatient Death, that waits his ev'ning prey.

MATILDA.

BOOK V.

BRIGHT rose the morn o'er Nile's expanding tide,
Whose fond embraces, like a blushing bride
Enraptur'd Egypt bless'd: above the stream
Peer'd the blue lotos, to the orient beam
Baring its azure breast. Rosetta's spires
Midst branching palms, gleam'd, like ascending fires
Tap'ring to Heav'n. From many an orange bow'r
The loit'ring breeze, to greet the sacred hour,
Stole choicest fragrance, but o'er none more sweet
The pilf'rer swept, than where yon lone retreat

Hum'd in spicy shades, arrests awhile
The passing car. There blest in Leila's smile
Liv'd Azem, once a slave, now happier far
Than the thron'd despot mid the spoils of war.
Far from a hard'ning Sire whose curse pursu'd,
Whose blade e'en thirsted for a Daughter's blood,
Still safe by stole, e'er pursu'd Arabia's soil,
The Orphan pair, like doves o'ergone with toil,
Here found a refuge. Hark, 'tis Azem's song!
And thus his note of transport flows along.

O Leila, come! sweet soother of each hour:
Whose lov'd idea prompts the heart-felt lay,
Come, ere the Sun his fervid influence pour,
And drink the fragrance of the risen day.

Soft music wakes around: the breath of Morn
Is fraught with health to tinge thy glowing cheek:
Each flow'r, each leaf, unnumber'd gems adorn,
Yet thee in vain, the fairest flow'r, I seek.

Here I expect thee in thy fav'rite bow'r
Rich with fond proofs of recollected joy:
Here where I dar'd my am'rous tale to pour,
And hung transported on thy answ'ring sigh.

Slow thro' yon opening glade I see thee move,
Our lisping cherub cradled on thy arm.
My heart enraptur'd springs in haste to prove
The close embrace, with genuine feelings warm.

Dear partner of my soul, my friend, my wife!
Have I a wish, 'tis center'd all in thee.
Have I a care, for cares embitter life,
Thy soothing voice speaks comfort sweet to me.

As thy lov'd beauties in that babe I trace,
That sleeps unconscious on thy snowy breast,
Rapture's warm tear steals silent down my face,
And ev'ry wayward passion sinks to rest.

T'welve circling moons have prov'd, that wedded love
Can soothe the ills life's varied storms impart.
In all our griefs, thy arms my haven prove;
I give in turn a sympathizing heart.

Yes! we have felt life's chilling tempest beat,
And kindred hands alas! assail'd our rest:
E'en when we hop'd thy Father's smile to meet,
Unnatural vengeance swell'd his stormy breast.

When the wild robber tore thee from his arms,
" Save her, she's thine!" the frantic Father cried.
I snatch'd from brutal force thy virgin charms,
But met with mock'ry, when I claim'd my bride.

But in thine eye I see forgiveness beam,
Thy cheek with Pity's mildest dew is wet.
Foe to our rest, I quit the painful theme,
And learn from thee to pity and forget.

How fair, how fresh, the opening prospect breaks!
How laughs the wave beneath the new-born ray!
Each folded flow'r from nightly slumber wakes,
And spreads its dewy cup to meet the day.

I gaze on thee, and can my lips refrain
In Nature's universal song to join?
By thee distinguish'd from the vulgar train
What are the worldling's boasted joys to mine?

He ceas'd, and scarce could Eden's hallow'd grove
Boast bliss more perfect, or a purer love.
" Asem!" said Leila, smiling thro' her tears,
" My foolish heart is chill'd with rising fears.
" Oft o'er my dreams terrific spectres glide:
" They tear thee senseless, bleeding, from my side:
" And while my frantic cries proclaim my woe;
" A Father's horrid laugh applauds the blow:
" Avert the omen, Heaven!" Upon his breast
She sank, with clasping arms still closer press'd
As if some envious fiend was crouching near
To rend him from her grasp. " O why this fear?
" Leila! this wild alarm? our rosy hours
" Are wing'd with joy. Within these peaceful bow'rs
" No danger lurks." " Why then with lonely tread
" Haunt'st thou the shade? of late, with secret dread
" I've mark'd the folded arms, the thoughtful air;
" Thy love is mock'ry, if I cannot share
" Thy inmost soul." " Leila!" with serious brow,
Ne'er had it gloom'd so fearfully as now,
" If these calm shades should ring with strange alarms,
" If Honour's stern command from these fond arms

" Force me to part"—" 'Twould be the knell of death!
" We cannot, must not part"—She gasp'd for breath,
She hung with horror on his face—all there
Was thoughtful sadness. " Leila! this despair
" Is insult to our Prophet: he, e'en he
" Slept not on roses here: why then should we,
" If but a shadow cross our path, presume
" To murmur at high Heav'n? the time may come,
" When o'er my dust thy widow'd sorrows fall,
" That thou, with bitter anguish, wilt recall
" This solemn hour! bethink thee, should the tale
" Blasting my fame, with with'ring sound assail
" Thy lonely heart! On the death-Angel's wings
" When to the bow'rs of bliss my spirit springs,
" Think, should the gates be clos'd, and o'er my ear
" Sweep a dread voice, 'thou hast no business here!
" Coward! thy slothful arm, unaw'd by shame,
" Shrank from the strife, that spread thy Prophet's fame.
" Thy sword was terror to thyself alone:
" Hence to the quenchless fire, th' eternal groan!'
" Think, Leila "—" 'Tis enough: the conflict 's o'er—
" My impious tongue shall wake reproach no more.

" To Alla I resign thee; not a tear
" Shall stain my cheek, at least while thou art near."
Low o'er her babe she bent, as if to hide
Some coming weakness. " Whence," at length she cried,
" This sudden warning?" " In these orange bow'rs
" As late I stray'd, from Cairo's distant tow'rs
" Dispatch'd, our winged messenger once more
" Regain'd its native haunts, and tidings bore
" Of awful import. Yes, the Crescent weeps
" Its proudest bulwark gone; in the grave sleeps
" The mighty Saladin! The opposing host
" Deem Sion won, but vain the ill-tim'd boast.
" Our warrior Tribes with royal robes invest
" Their idol Saphadin, by all confest
" The thunderbolt of war: the baffled foe
" His arm has felt, shall tremble still to know
" Its vigour undecay'd. The sacred band
" Companion of his steps, with mild command
" He summons me to join. No voice but thine
" Shall thwart my wish, and freely I resign
" The choice to thee. Leila! if ought we've known
" Of wedded bliss, the gift to him alone

" Is wholly due. When late, with burning brain
" I track'd o'er wilds unknown the robber train
" That tore thee from thy home, the sandy waste,
" The cloudless ether, mock'd my panting haste.
" I thought of thee: more frantic grew my speed,
" Till faint I sank across my faithful steed.
" With instinct sure he bore his helpless load
" Where a lone well its scanty boon bestow'd.
" To sense restor'd, I bless'd the cooling wave:
" A neighb'ring palm its twilight shelter gave.
" I woke—upon an unknown traveller's sleep
" Not far apart, I mark'd a ruffian creep!
" Swifter than thought, I rush'd with naked blade;
" The wretch that threaten'd death, was lifeless laid.
" Up sprang the stranger—with a frown defy'd—
" He heard, he grasp'd my hand, 'brave youth!' he cried,
" 'I owe thee more than life—if right I read
" Yon bloody corse, 'twas Alla wrought the deed,
" And thou, the instrument—let proof decide'—
" Eager he rent the crimson vest aside,
" 'Tis here—that proof—the traitor stands confest—
" The tablet with the Christian's sign imprest!

" O cursed gold! what thou, whose sun-bright fame
" Once spurn'd communion with the deeds of shame!
" But now—how will my royal Brother grieve!
" We heard thy treason, but could scarce believe!'
" 'Twas he, 'twas Saphadin before me stood,
" He wept: his tears the apostate wretch bedew'd.
" O'er the bleak desert sped the high-born Chief,
" To urge from Egypt's shores, the slow relief.
" I talk'd of thee. 'My friend! for such thou art
" And ever shalt be, ere compell'd to part,
" Accept this signet: to my heart and hand
" 'Twill prove a passport, and my aid command,
" Should aid be wanting!' Thou art now my bride,
" Yet but for him, thy youth, thy beauty's pride,
" Had wither'd in captivity. While I—"
" O cease!" cried Leila, " I can nought deny.
" E'en should'st thou linger, from thy selfish dream
" My voice should rouse thee, jealous of thy fame."

Along the bow'ry glade that far below
Edg'd the bright wave, two forms ascending slow

Broke farther converse. One, with feeble tread,
Bow'd o'er his pilgrim staff the aged head.
" 'Tis he, the hermit of the desert!" cried
The impassion'd Leila. " 'Tis our sainted guide
" That snatch'd us, sinking midst the burning waste
" From the death-Angel's grasp! O let us haste
" To greet the good old Man. Whate'er his creed,
" Man is his Brother, if the cry of need
" Arrest his pitying ear." With duteous aid
They led, where coolness walk'd the scented shade.

" When last, my friends, we breath'd our sad farewell,
" When my faint blessing oft repeated fell,
" Methought our intercourse on earth was o'er,
" For I am old, and cares oppress me sore."
He turn'd, where cradled on its Mother's breast
The infant smil'd, caressing and carest;
As if an adder stung, he starts aside,
And strives with outspread hands his face to hide.
His youthful friends respectful silence keep,
And weep themselves to see the good Man weep.

O could their cares those with'ring thoughts control,
That pour'd the gloom of midnight o'er his soul!
Some melting notes broke startling o'er his ear,
And rous'd him from his trance. " O once how dear
" That strain, when wafted o'er fair Arno's tide
" It breath'd of peace! when o'er his new-made bride,
" That mask'd with Angel-smiles a heart of hell,
" Ill fated Julian hung. What pow'rful spell
" Lurks in thy song, poor Youth! I breathless hear—
" It steals me from myself—with throb of fear
" I mark thy face, thy voice, and with my fate
" Oft deem thee link'd." Apart unnotic'd sate
The minstrel Youth. Now from the enquiring gaze,
The cry of wonder, and the burst of praise,
He shrank abash'd: he seem'd of gentle race,
And his light form was rich in native grace.
" E'en as ye see him now," the Hermit cried,
" Save innocence no arms, save heav'n no guide,
" Midst a fierce Arab horde, that throng'd around
" List'ning his harp, the advent'rous boy I found.
" O wondrous pow'r of song! the rugged host
" Like statues stood, in speechless transport lost.

" The godlike rites of hospitality
" He sang, and triumph beam'd in every eye:
" But when his theme was love, the panting breast,
" The glowing cheek, the master-hand confess'd!
" No pale mistrust the lonely stripling wore,
" All were his friends, and all protection swore.
" The oath was sacred—scarce with guard more sure
" Had kindred fenc'd him, or with love more pure.
" I question'd him, and soon his simple tale
" Was told—'twas England shrin'd his native vale,
" Dearer than life, till in one common tomb
" His Parents slept. Soon from their desolate home
" His brother parted, on whose better years
" His weakness lean'd. Midst solitary tears
" Some winters past, 'twas now the purpose rose
" By meditation steel'd, from dull repose
" To wake, and follow o'er the wave afar
" His long-lost Brother to the holy war.
" With his lov'd harp, all friendless and alone,
" He dar'd the terrors of a world unknown.
" But how those tender limbs the pang could bear
" Of long, long travel, and unceasing care,

" 'Tis awful wonder! let this calm retreat
" Shelter awhile, my friends, his way-worn feet.
" Not for myself I ask, a wretch unblest;
" Alas! I've that within that murders rest."
Pity! the female heart's thy natural throne;
No other virtues can thy want atone.
Rous'd with the thrilling tale, o'er Leila's cheek
The hallow'd tears of sweet compassion break.
She gaz'd the Orphan Boy. In ev'ry look
The heart's warm feelings eloquently spoke.
Their glances met.—Quick starting from his seat,
The Minstrel fell, wild sobbing, at her feet.
" I am not what I seem—Lady, those tears
" Rouse me to confidence, and chide my fears.
" In pity hear—the moment now is giv'n
" Which many a ling'ring moon I've ask'd of heav'n."
But readier than the tongue, the heaving vest,
The burning blush, the truth too well confess'd.
" Methinks," sigh'd Leila, " 'tis no Brother's smile
" Whose loss has lur'd thee from thy native isle;
" Thou art some wretched Maid—one pow'r alone
" Could from thy home, to brave a world unknown,

" Ensnare thy artless youth; that pow'r is love.
" Woe to the virgin heart, condemn'd to prove
" An unrequited flame!" " Such heart is mine!
" Outcast from home, at Love's seductive shrine
" My earthly peace is wreck'd: yet list my tale—
" Alas, thou wilt condemn!" As lily pale
Wistful she gaz'd, as if the pitying tear,
The hand's soft clasp in loneliness most dear,
Might yet deceive her hopes. " Sue not to me,
" Poor trembler! I with desp'rate heart, like thee,
" Have walk'd Love's thorny maze, and well can spare
" A sigh for such as thee. Beside me share
" This shady bow'r, and breathe in friendship's ear
" Thy secret soul, for none but friends are here."
She rose, and " thou, my venerable guide!
" Forgive the innocent fraud that fain would hide
" My virgin shame. Thy self so good, so pure,
" Thou wouldst have spurn'd me; ill could I endure
" One frown from thee. From many an earthly ill
" Thy arm has shielded—be a Father still!"
" Who art thou? speak! e'en such a pleading look
" That Siren wore, whose foul desertion broke

" My Julian's heart! like thee, she sued—like thee
" She call'd me Father; as a blasted tree
" Childless I live to curse her! her fair brow
" Like thine seem'd stampt with truth—O prove not thou
" False as that Angel-fiend, and I to thee
" Will prove a Father, thou my Child shalt be."
" Ah woe is me!" exclaim'd the shiv'ring Maid,
" How by one fatal lapse from truth betray'd!
" Where I would love inspire, my honest aim
" Is crush'd by doubt, and friendship's kindling flame
" Scarce glimmers, ere it dies. My soul recoils
" At aught impure—Yet whence these fearful toils
" That snare me to my ruin? o'er my fame
" Suspicion low'rs—as from a guilty dream
" I wake—the phantom that beset my brain
" Now melts in air—no tears can cleanse the stain
" That deepens o'er my youth—O wert thou nigh
" My Mother! madness rul'd the hour, when I
" Fled from thy honour'd side." The old Man strove,
And sighs almost o'erpow'r'd his words of love,
To soothe her keen remorse. She shed no tear,
In her fix'd vacant look laugh'd wild despair.

Shudd'ring he gaz'd. Ne'er with such tyrant pow'r
Knock'd Pity at his heart, " poor lonely flow'r!
" Let harden'd Sinners tremble. Save by name
" What canst thou know of guilt? Can inward shame
" Depress those earthward eyes, whose ev'ry beam
" Should sparkle with delight, for pure the dream
" The fairy dream of youth? Can sinful spot
" Cloud years like thine? O 'tis thy desolate lot
" That presses on thy brain! tho' now beset
" With phantoms wild and strange, thy lute shall yet
" Be strung to songs of joy." Like healing balm
His soothing accents fell. A gentle calm
Steals o'er each shatter'd sense, and down her cheek
The bursting tear descends. " How shall I speak
" My thanks to heav'n and thee! far, far from home
" Friendless, I shudder at the woes to come.
" O lov'd Dunelmia! scenes of early youth!
" When ev'ry pulse was peace, for all was truth;
" For ever lost—ne'er shall this burning brow
" Feel the pure breath thy mountain gales bestow!
" Father, if heav'n has unknown wrath in store,
" 'Tis for the ingrate Child: O never more

" My Mother, shall thy blessing thrill my ear !"
The old Man starts—" my Child ! if right I hear
" Thou nam'st Dunelmia—is that distant coast—
" Who art thou ? speak ! e'en now a spectral host
" Of thoughts long buried wake !" well Leila knew
Why shook his aged limbs, why paler grew
His livid cheek ! " Yes in those climes so fair
" Bright rose my morn of youth. Nor guilt, nor care,
" Darken'd my sunny path. O I was blest
" In a fond Mother's smile ! her gentle breast
" Shrin'd not a pulse, which throbb'd not all for me
" For me, her worthless Child, whose infamy
" Must rend her spotless soul. My Father too !
" E'en in this distant world excell'd by few,
" De Clifford's name"—He heard no more, a scream
Rang thro' the bow'r ! " he dies—life's feverish dream
" Is o'er," cried Leila, as the gen'rous strife
She flew to share, to wake suspended life.
Scarce reason dawn'd, impatience mix'd with fear
Mark'd his wild look : his hurried glance, now here
Now there, turn'd quick. " Gone, gone, 'twas like a dream !
" Yet here methinks she knelt—life's quiv'ring flame

" Must soon expire—return while yet I live,
" And I will bless thee, for thy sake forgive
" Thy erring Mother —Whither art thou flown,
" Sweet vision !" O'er his ear it breaks—that tone
Rous'd ebbing life ! again the stranger Maid
Glides to his feet—the past was all o'erpaid.
He wept, he bless'd, embrac'd : the wedded pair
Read all his soul, and all his raptures share.
But She the unconscious cause, she knew not why
The old Man's transport swell'd to ecstacy !
Ne'er did maternal lips more fondly bless,
Or with more warmth maternal arms caress.
Wild throbb'd her heart ; that chord which long had slept,
Rang glad reply, by fost'ring kindness swept.
Each pulse, with bound elastic, sprang to meet
That love, which breath'd of home, so soothing sweet.
" My Child ! O never from this hour to part,
" Herald of peace, long alien to my heart,
" Tho' the keen question tremble on thy tongue,
" Suspend awhile inquiry. Thou, ere long,
" Shalt read my inmost soul : my greedy ear
" Impatient waits thy tale—I burn to hear

" The story of thy youth—O nought conceal !
" The doting heart can veriest trifles feel
" When link'd with those it loves." Pale, deadly pale
His bloodless cheek, as o'er Matilda's tale
He hung in silent awe. Scarce throbb'd a vein,
Scarce breath was drawn, as flow'd the simple strain
E'en from her earliest years. Her fav'rite theme
Was still her Mother's love. A brighter beam
Fill'd her dark eye, as from her artless tongue
Pour'd the full tide of gratitude along,
Its source, a duteous heart. " Not mine alone
" Father ! this tender care. O there was one
" A gentle babe, hurl'd by the stormy tide
" On Heorta's fatal coast ! O'er all beside
" Swept the remorseless surge. My Mother's breast,
" Ah ! who like her with Angel-mercy blest,
" Cradled the lonely Boy : the milky wave
" From the same fount we drank, no rivals save
" In mutual fondness, and the love we bore
" Our common Mother. Childhood's dream was o'er,
" Youth came, but found no change ; each hour that pass'd
" Was wing'd with joy, still sweeter than the last.

" By all around with kindred warmth carest,
" I deem'd the world in bright enchantment drest.
" I deem'd, and rued the sad reverse with tears,
" That Youth's frail joys would stand the test of years.
" Midst feats of mimic war, when Edmund's spear
" Was wreath'd with conquest, to my shiv'ring ear
" Swell'd the loud triumph, like some woe-fraught knell
" Pregnant with fate to one I lov'd too well.
" When proud Dunelmia's peers, at Richard's call,
" Rous'd their brave vassals, to avenge the fall
" Of prostrate Sion, as one Man arose
" The hardy Warriors! from that hour, repose
" Was stranger to my couch. O who could blame
" If Edmund's bosom caught the sacred flame!
" To me alone 'twas anguish; wild with fear
" I wept, I pray'd! not e'en Matilda's tear
" Could shake his stern resolve. That voice, which late
" Breath'd sweetest music, now seem'd ting'd with hate.
" He grasp'd my Father's knees, there eager clung
" Till with resistless eloquence he wrung
" His slow assent, that he might proudly share
" The glorious toil; 'twas past--from scenes so fair

" Once bound of ev'ry wish, o'er seas unknown
" Headlong he rush'd ; each fairy hope o'erthrown,
" I watch'd from topmost tow'r his parting sail,
" And still my vigils brav'd the midnight gale.
" O, there my spectral form for three long years,
" Was daily seen! I dream'd of hostile spears,
" Of distant wreck ; till now, how much I lov'd,
" I never knew. With deepest pity mov'd
" My Mother strove to soothe—her searching eye
" Had mark'd, nor blam'd the infant flame, ere I
" Had question'd my own heart. But let me close
" My tedious tale. At length the dawn arose
" Big with event: My Father's travell'd feet
" Trod his own halls once more ; I rush'd to greet ;
" Hope wing'd each pulse, triumphant o'er despair—
" I came—I gasp'd for breath—he was not there,
" My heart's sole idol! on my Father's breast
" Sick, sick at heart I sank—he sooth'd, caress'd—
" I heard him not! a Chief of gentle blood
" Gaz'd silent near, who long in vain had sued
" My virgin love; I caught, with shudd'ring ear,
" Their fitful speech—in agony of fear

" I clasp'd my Father's knees—of me they spoke!
" The fatal pledge was past; with serious look
" He mock'd my maiden fears—' This gallant Knight
" Has sav'd thy Father's life—reward more bright
" Than thee, he claims not, nor can I bestow—'
" Vain were my burning pray'rs— his low'ring brow
" Gloom'd dark—his parting threat reply defy'd,
" At morn St. Aubyn claims his promis'd bride!
" The awful menace, like a with'ring blast,
" Froze my warm heart—all hope on earth was past
" Save from a Mother's lips;—Yet she, e'en she,
" Whose eye, whose arm, from helpless infancy
" Watch'd all for me, whose unbought smile approv'd
" My love for injur'd Edmund, now unmov'd
" Gaz'd my despair! E'en at the sacred shrine
" Desperate she knelt; She bade me there resign
" Those hopes, so link'd with life, that death alone
" Could rend their union. With sepulcral groan
" She heard my vow; ' No pow'r,' she cried, ' can save!
" Remorse and judgment wait me; with the grave
" Is all my bus'ness now.' Her alter'd look
" Spoke desperation; from the shrine she broke—

" A voice rose awful from a neighb'ring tomb,
" And chain'd her to the earth. ' Why tempt thy doom,
" Lost wretch ? thus steep'd in sin, thus unprepar'd,
" I rush'd on self-destruction—madly dar'd
" To brave an angry God ! Eternal woe
" Is now my lot, midst tort'ring flames that glow
" Unquenchable. Lost wretch, while breath is giv'n,
" Pour at yon shrine repentant vows to Heav'n !'
" The voice was hush'd : I clos'd my shudd'ring eyes,
" Lest to my view some shape of horror rise :
" But 'twas a voice from Heav'n, whose soothing pow'r
" Calm'd the fierce swell of frenzy's wildest hour.
" ' Father of mercy, hear ! thy will be done :'
" My heart transported hail'd the alter'd tone.
" Low at the altar's foot my Mother lay,
" Wet was her cheek, despair was past away.
" Yet Father ! while I felt her close embrace,
" E'en while her scalding tears bedew'd my face,
" ' Daughter ! that morn, that sees thee Edmund's bride,
" Shall dawn upon my corse !' I nought replied,
" But wept with tears of blood the cause unknown
" That steel'd a Mother's heart. All hope was flown.

" E'en now the eager voice, the [illegible]
" Announc'd the morrow's rite. [illegible]
" Fled from my Father's house. [illegible]
" Unheeded rav'd; the tott'ring pine [illegible]
" That bridg'd the flood, nor left one trace of ear
" Save of pursuit; I urg'd my mad career
" Shame, duty, all forgot. In every vein
" Rag'd lawless fire, that to my heated brain
" Shone like an eastern star, whose golden beam
" Would pilot me to joy. As from a dream
" I wake; that star is set, and chilling gloom
" Deepens around. Of Mother, friends, and home
" All thought is link'd with madness. 'Tis to thee
" Father! I turn for comfort; thou shalt be
" My guide! methinks with thee there lurks a spell
" To chase despair, and all may yet be well."
Matilda ceas'd; like one arraign'd she stood
In breathless awe. A lengthen'd pause ensued
Chilling her boding heart—O! heed not this
Lorn Maid! the gloom that darkens o'er his brow
Tho' fierce the storm that rends his aged breast

The struggling soul; list! in low mutter'd tone
" This crime at least is spar'd her!—God, I own
" Thy saving mercy here!" he turn'd where stood
The wretched pleader, by suspense subdued—
" Well mayst thou shrink, poor trembler! thou art one
" Sprung from a fiend, whose blood can scarce atone
" My deadly wrongs; yet for thy sake alone
" I will not curse her; I have sworn to shield
" And Heav'n has heard my vow. O, when reveal'd
" My buried woes, how will the truth appall!
" There, where thou lov'st the most, the bolt will fall
" Heaviest, and deepest. Arm thee for despair!
" He, for whose sake thy feet unshrinking dare
" This rugged toil, for whom shame, duty, home,
" All were resign'd, sprung from one common womb
" He is thy brother!" Ne'er could horror break
In sounds more desolate; she could not speak,
Despair, that calm was thine! E'en he, who sped
The fatal shaft, with woe-dejected head
Turn'd from the wreck it made. To nature true,
Around the beauteous statue Leila threw

Her clasping arms. Rous'd by the fond appeal
Matilda wept ; the soft'ning tear-drops heal
Her burning brain. " Thou fearful Man !" she sigh'd,
" Pause not—the worst is past—O nothing hide."
Scarce could her breast its panting tenant hold,
As, sadly slow, the eventful tale was told.
O ! what can fiercer rend a Daughter's frame
Than the dread sound, that knells a Mother's shame !
Now flam'd her cheek with indignation's glow,
Now mark that cheek, pale, chill, as Alpine snow.
Now rose the firm denial to her tongue,
And her heart heav'd to meet the sland'rous wrong,
Alas, she could not doubt ! around her head
A host of ills their black'ning horrors spread.
" O Mother, Mother ! tho' the world forsake
" And brand thy matron fame, this heart must break
" Ere it forget thee. With unhallow'd feet
" I dar'd desert thee—headlong rush'd to meet
" That deadly snare, by some foul demon laid
" To lure me to my fate ; thy guardian aid
" I madly spurn'd ; thou wouldst have sav'd—O, why
" Crush'd not high heav'n, my bold impiety !"

Cold heartless world! she seem'd no Child of thine;
Such duteous love, a flow'r of growth divine,
Thy ruder breath had chill'd. Who trusts to thee,
Floats on a plank, amid a shoreless sea,
The sport of every wave. Her artless tone,
Her patient meekness, reckless of its own
To weep another's woe, around her flung
A hallow'd charm; her friends all breathless hung;
In silent awe confess'd the pow'r unseen
Beneath whose shield walks Innocence serene
The stormy path of life. With trembling tongue,
" My Child!" the Hermit said, " what pow'r so strong
" As Nature's voice? tho' sorrows deepen round,
" Still, still may cause for gratitude be found.
" Had Edmund's heart, I shudder e'en to name,
" Caught but one spark of that unnatural flame
" That fir'd thy own!" " That dream of horror 's past!"
She wildly cried, " like thee, I shrink aghast
" From memory's harrowing page; 'tis there I read
" In burning characters, the nameless deed

" That whelms me with remorse; blest be the pow'r
" That wrought the change. Search my heart's inmost
core,
" No pulse runs riot there. E'en Edmund's name
" Wakes not a throb, save what a Brother's claim
" May ask in Nature's right."—" Then why despair?
" That voice which bade us meet, will yet repair
" Our shatter'd hopes. But he! how shall I name
" The apostate wretch; alas, of Edmund's shame
" Dark is the tale, that thick'ning rumours fling!
" False to his God, his Country, and his King,
" Against the Cross the turban'd recreant rears
" The impious blade, nor future judgment fears.
" Let us begone—a voice within me cries,
" Haste, try to save, ere the rank wound defies
" Thy utmost skill!" he grasp'd his staff—the Maid
Sprang to his side, his feeble steps to aid.
" Yet stay," cried Asem, " in these peaceful bow'rs
" Rest yet awhile—exhausted Nature's pow'rs
" Demand repose; thy fair companion's cheek
" Mocks the vain smiles, that fain would comfort speak."

Shudd'ring he gaz'd her brow o'er-spread with care,
And grateful turn'd the proffer'd boon to share.

The truce was o'er—yet still the murd'rous blade
Slept in its sheath, and better feelings sway'd
The hostile bands. Amid the turban'd host
Mingled the Cross. The scowling brow was lost
Big with defiance, and o'er Syria's shore
Walk'd smiling Peace. The halcyon calm is o'er,
The death-note loads the gale! the western world
Again the desolating flag unfurl'd.
The beauteous Vision fled, while far and wide
The teeming bulwarks darken'd all the tide.
Fierce o'er the coast the iron Warriors spread,
And the land rock'd beneath their mighty tread.
Tho' sad Experience point to days gone by
They spurn the warning, and to combat fly.

Calm and serene, like Mars his tow'ring form,
The royal Saphadin awaits the storm.
Hush'd are all private feuds; on ev'ry side
The moony Chieftains to his call reply'd.

Their lightning march anticipates the foe,
And Jaffa's streets with Christian blood o'erflow.
But vengeance hover'd near; how deep, how dread,
How the Cross triumph'd, and the Moslem bled,
Let Sidon tell. Ne'er wreath'd a prouder day
The blessed Cross! now nought could bar the way
To Sion's tow'rs; on, on, they thund'ring sweep
The glorious harvest of their toils to reap.
Amidst the gen'ral rout, retiring slow
Oft turn'd the Soldan, with undaunted brow,
To face the hostile tide. The proud array,
The gorgeous moons, that mock'd the early day,
Ere noon, were scatter'd all; alone he stood.
" Haste," cried a voice, " haste from this scene of blood,
" Reserve thyself for vengeance! thou shalt rise
" More awful from defeat." With kindling eyes
He heard the call—it breath'd of hope—it spoke
Of victory! Away he fiercely broke
Nor check'd his steed till far, at eventide,
Proud Thoron's castled steep was dim descry'd.
" Osmyn!" the Soldan said, " here pause awhile;
" Ill can our steeds endure this lengthen'd toil.

" I am thy debtor ; Alla ! grant my pray'r ;
" May Beauty's smile reward thy gen'rous care.
" O, were Ismena here, my partial voice
" Should ring thy worth, and here should rest her choice.
" But why these tears ? that groan which, half supprest,
" Would scape observance ?" " Be the truth confest,
" My heart is wither'd ! 'tis a raging hell
" Which Mercy cannot reach. I dare not kneel,
" I have abjur'd my God ! a wretch like me,
" Blasts not yon glorious Sun. 'Tis agony
" To think what once I was, what I am now !"
Furious he rent the turban from his brow,
And, as he scann'd the fearful depths beneath,
" Wretch !" cried the Soldan, " will that leap of death
" Bring thee relief ? Self-murder enters not
" Our Prophet's blissful bow'rs ; why mourn thy lot ?
" So great I'll make thee, e'en thyself shalt own
" Thy wealth, thy pow'r, scarce second to the throne !"
" Forbear, forbear ! Not e'en Ismena's charms,
" Tho' here she smil'd, and woo'd me to her arms,
" Could calm my guilty soul ; thy throne, thy all,
" Alike I spurn. Art thou a God ? recall

" My banish'd peace. Hear'st thou yon shouts? they
come,
" Thy keen pursuers, who have sworn thy doom!"
A sudden splendor fir'd his alter'd look,
And a wild laugh some desp'rate purpose spoke.
" Hope dies not yet! It points a glorious deed,
" And Heav'n may still be mine; thou, thou, must bleed!"
He grasp'd the Soldan's arm; a pause ensued
While each the other gaz'd. " Talk'st thou of blood?
" Osmyn, wilt thou betray me?" Osmyn's brow
Droop'd earthward, flush'd with shame's disorder'd glow.
O self-deceiv'd! why shrink, like meanest slave,
From fellow-man, yet wrath eternal brave?
At length, " the die is cast! On, ere too late;
" I see the banner'd Cross—whate'er my fate,
" I'll not desert thee now!" As on they sped,
The trump's shrill bray, the shout, the steed's quick tread,
Came mingled on the breeze. Soon far away
They died in distance. Whence that rich array,
That martial pomp, that to the setting ray
Gleams beautiful? O'er Thoron's glitt'ring tow'r
That on yon ridgy steep, in lonely pow'r,

Hangs like an eagle's eyry, proudly peer
The crescent banners. O'er the Soldan's ear
Breaks thrilling music; well the strains he knew
Dear to the Arab breast! each moment grew
His special wonder. Thoron's crested brow
Swarm'd all with life, and winding from below
Successive ranks appear'd. Hope's tow'ring soul
Cheer'd the bright scene, and order crown'd the whole.
He breaks to sight; the rocks with transport ring,
And on his path exulting Myriads spring.
But there was one, whom from his Courser's seat
The Monarch leap'd, with outstretch'd arms to greet.
" Asem, my doubts are o'er! no hand but thine
" Could plan this well-tim'd work, this bold design.
" Kneel not to me; let all distinction cease;
" On thee the fainting Crescent leans for peace.
" O rise! thy glorious destiny fulfill:
" I gaze around, and feel a Monarch still."
" My gracious Liege! if Asem dare advise,
" Haste to yon tow'rs, whose lordly front defies
" All outward force; to meet the foe, e'en now
" Be mine!"—a frown pass'd o'er the Monarch's brow,

Yet with a smile, " shall I midst ribs of stone
" Inglorious lurk, when danger shakes the throne?
" Mine is the deepest stake, and mine must be
" The post of daring." " Ever rest with thee
" That post, awhile thy godlike zeal abate—
" Haply the strife, big with thy kingdom's fate,
" May here be fought; that station 's worthy thee,
" Rich with a hallow'd grave, or laurell'd victory.
" Be mine the task, to lure with cautious wile
" Thy fierce pursuers thro' the dark defile
" That 's link'd with Thoron's steep; that service done,
" Their mighty host, like mist before the sun,
" Shall melt in fruitless siege! bid to the skies
" In loudest peals, thy martial music rise."
Prophetic seem'd his voice—the kindling crowd
Cheer'd the bold Chief, and cymbals clang'd aloud.
Away broke Asem with a chosen few
Whose long experience ev'ry winding knew.
Thro' many a rugged path they cautious wound,
And pausing oft to catch the faintest sound
That thrill'd Eve's deep'ning calm. On tiptoe tread
As Asem pass'd, from a rock's jutting shade

A Figure rush'd—"harm not a friend"—the cry
Arrests the uplifted stroke—"a Moslem I
"Escap'd from Christian bonds"—"Then quick disclose
"And so shall grace be shown, our hov'ring foes
"Where now encamp'd?" "They slothful ease disdain
"And with fierce shouts, like madmen, sweep amain
"Skirting these solitudes, whose tangled chain
"Would their hot march impede; Jerusalem
"Their only aim—all other prize they deem
"Or sure, or worthless. Be like me sincere,
"Where is our Soldan? for his private ear
"I've news of import"—"Youth! thy words are fair,
"But treach'ry is abroad; I fain would spare,
"But justice mocks the wish"—"list ere the blow
"Be sore repented." 'Twas in whispers low
He breath'd his tale—to Asem's startled ear
It seem'd a dream of night, yet proof so clear
Forbade all doubt. Amaz'd his comrades view'd
His alter'd mien; that voice which threaten'd blood,
Was rich with courtesy. "The hour," he cried,
"With wonder teems! be thou our angel guide,

" 'Tis Alla sent thee." On the Stranger led.
Tho' wrapt in gloom, familiar to his tread
Seem'd every pathless maze; he paus'd at length,
" Where now thy mighty spear, thy arm of strength,
" Lost wretch! thou dream'st of conquest, soon to weep
" Thy captive lot! my wounds, like thine, are deep,
" And thou, the unconscious cause. Our destinies
" Hang on this fearful night. Awake! Arise!"
Quick starting at the call, a Christian Knight
Sprang from the ground; the turban meets his sight!
He turns to grasp his spear; his active foes
Anticipate the intent, and round him close.
Reft of his arms, by numbers whelm'd around
Vain were a giant's strength; they seiz'd, they bound,
And back to Thoron's steep, at Asem's word,
The indignant Captive led. How oft preferr'd
His vain appeal! " Not for myself I fear
" Or sue for grace; a Youth, as life-blood dear,
" Has midst these trackless deserts from my side
" Unnotic'd stray'd. Be not my suit denied—
" Haste, let us seek, from ling'ring horrors free,
" Ere death surprise! O, he was all to me,

" So fond, so true !" his oft-repeated cry
Was lost in air—Yet rous'd to sympathy
Seem'd one lone heart, for deep'ning thro' the gloom
Came fitful sobs. O give thy anguish room,
Thou child of perfidy ! Youth's sunny brow
Should beam with truth and confidence ; but thou !
Not tears of blood thy treason can atone ;
Tho' bound in chains, he fears for thee alone.

Meanwhile the Crescent host in Thoron's tow'r
Nerv'd heart and hand to meet the stormy hour.
Tho' in wild rout they sought a refuge here,
Now not an eye betray'd one glance of fear.
For he, their warrior-king, the soldier's pride,
Cheer'd every heart, and shar'd the toil beside.
When walls of brass a vain protection prove,
A state's best safeguard is a People's love.
So steep the crested rock, its shelving side
Precipitous, the assailants' foot defy'd.
E'en if that foot had unresisted gain'd
Its topmost cliff, what farther hope remain'd ?

Huge massive walls, that bristled with the foe,
Frown'd yet above; an awful depth below.
Once, when the rule of right was pow'r alone,
There fix'd a lawless Chief his robber-throne;
Pour'd far and wide his Myrmidons of ill,
That, veil'd in night and mystery, fulfil
Their hellish trust. 'Mid rapine, flame, and blood,
The general curse their wasteful track pursu'd.
Safe in his eyry, laugh'd the merciless foe,
And mock'd the powerless storm, that rag'd below.
Tho' Tyre was sued to crush the deadly pest,
His ready gold the spreading league repress'd.
But when his daring lust, in day's broad glare,
Tore from her weeping train a high-born Fair,
The boast of princely Tyre, round Thoron's steep
Rous'd to revenge, the Tyrian legions sweep.
While six long months the fruitless siege they ply'd,
A scanty few their mighty host deride.
Oft from above, loud thund'ring o'er their sleep,
Crushing whole ranks, the rocks' huge masses leap.
Their numbers thinn'd, their hopes dissolv'd in air,
The stoutest heart was palsied with despair.

E'en by a handful foil'd, the Ocean-Queen
With brow indignant, mark'd the inglorious scene.
She proffer'd gold; snar'd by the dazzling spell,
One Traitor yields, and captur'd Thoron fell.
The Robber-Chief, in fate's last trying hour,
Seiz'd the fair prize, and from the topmost tow'r
Plung'd headlong. Stung to madness at the view,
The victor-blade no pause from slaughter knew,
Till not a victim breath'd; nor rested now
The dread revenge; impal'd on Thoron's brow
Long did the ghastly forms the truth attest
Of Tyre's long-baffled pow'rs. One o'er the rest,
As if in mock'ry, seem'd some badge to hold;
'Twas he: the traitor with the fatal gold.

That peace his cheering voice around him flung,
The Soldan knew not. On one moment hung
His kingdom's safety; should the hostile pow'rs
Spurn meaner conquest, and to Sion's tow'rs
On midnight pinions sweep, at once destroy'd
Were Asem's tow'ring hopes! their whelming tide

Would onward roll, and rumour's cry of fear
Herald their march, proclaiming far and near
The late defeat; e'en more—the royal name
Might swell the list of dead! his panting frame
Shook e'en to agony. "I come, I come,
" Despair not yet, my Country! other doom
" Than ruin shall be thine." Tumultuous cries
Ring thro' the courts; loud, louder still, they rise
Mingled with Asem's name. He springs to meet;
The Warrior-Youth rush'd breathless to his feet.
Around, the moony Chiefs respectful hung,
And keen impatience hush'd the martial throng.
" Asem, my friend! if right thy looks I read,
" They teem with strange event." " My liege, I need
" Thy pardon, if in reverence due I fail.
" Fast wanes the night, but ere yon stars be pale,
" Much must be done. This stranger Youth, who now
" Shrouds from the gen'ral gaze the downcast brow,
" When late we wound the gloomy wilds beneath,
" Thy Servants met; the threat of chains or death,
" Pal'd not his cheek; thou only wert his theme.
" Speak, gentle Boy! thy solemn pledge redeem.

" Thou know'st the forfeit well; if false thy tale,
" Thy hours are number'd; haste, remove the veil
" And bare the promis'd truth. Our King is here,
" He whom thou seek'st—Our lives, our all that 's dear,
" Hang on thy lips." 'Twas deep amazement all!
The undaunted Youth, obedient to the call,
Stept calmly forth. A solitary cry
Burst from the crowd of rapt'rous ecstacy.
Forth sprang the Apostate! at his feet he fell,
Breath'd not a word, for words were poor to tell
Of bliss too vast for speech; yet no return
That transport met, save glance of deepest scorn,
Scarce seen, ere vanish'd. " Speak, who art thou?" cried
The impatient King. In silver sounds that glide
Resistless to his heart, the Stranger sigh'd,
" My second Father!" She, so long deplor'd,
The fair Ismena, as from death restor'd,
Now fill'd his eager arms. That weakness o'er,
She turn'd to greet the Chiefs, well known before
In many a hard-fought field. It seem'd a dream
That mock'd their ravish'd gaze. With panting frame

They drank her words of fire. " Tho' scarcely met,
" Once more we part, my friends! E'en now, while yet
" The night be young, I seek the hov'ring foe
" On desp'rate purpose bent. Alone I go,
" Alla, my guide! Yes, round these sacred tow'rs
" A spell is flung, which o'er the Christian pow'rs
" Shall twine in deadly clasp. When o'er the ear
" The hostile trumpet break, expect me near."
Still guis'd as simple page, the high-born Maid
Rush'd eager forth; no falt'ring step betray'd
A throb of fear. The look resolv'd and high,
The thronging Chiefs, spoke deed of daring nigh.
As the courts echoed to the hasty tread,
The waning moon a sickly radiance shed.
They reach the barrier gates; flung open wide,
Beyond, the shadowy depth was dim descry'd.
She paus'd not on the brink—the advent'rous Fair
Sprang down the cliff. Each bosom burn'd to share
The glorious task. The moon-lit ramparts round
Swarm'd all with life, to catch the less'ning sound,
The echo of her feet. When heard no more
Her spirit still remain'd; no eye, but wore

A fiercer splendour, as, disdaining rest,
The impatient groups their new-born hopes express'd.
Her pure devotedness, her fearless zeal,
How few could rival, but all well could feel!
Each heart was steel'd, tho' rose a world in arms,
To meet the shock, unaw'd by vain alarms.
Yet there was one, that with this stirring scene
Held not communion; whose dejected mien
As Asem mark'd, "My Liege!" he warmly cried,
" Woe fall the wretch, whose smiles insidious hide
" A dubious faith! in thy heart's inmost core
" Thou wear'st that Man." The Soldan's features wore
A sterner shade. " Asem! scarce few hours old
" Since first ye met, why then with charge so bold
" T'aunt his fair fame? Some busy sland'rous tongue
" Has mock'd thy easy faith. Or prove the wrong,
" Or Asem is unjust." " O could'st thou read
" Great King! my naked heart, I should not need
" To vindicate my truth. The tale e'en now,
" Where throng yon jealous Chiefs with serious brow,
" Gains hourly strength. We know the mighty lure
" That bade his lips their ancient faith abjure.

" That spell once broke, what earthly ties can bind
" The Traitor to his God? like idle wind
" His vows, his oaths will prove." The Soldan's brain
Was chaos all. Could he to truths so plain
Withhold assent? not Asem's voice alone,
His long-tried Chiefs, the bulwarks of his throne,
Impugn'd the Stranger's faith. The warning sound
Stole to his heart, and there an echo found.
" Asem! thou shak'st my very soul. I fain
" Would mock thy fears, but self delusion 's vain.
" O, should he prove the wretch thy lips proclaim,
" Dread as his guilt, like heav'n's fierce bolt of flame
" Shall fall my vengeance; should that spell be broke!
" It must be so—her cold disdainful look
" Might freeze e'en love like his; the task be mine
" To prove his truth. Methinks some ill design
" Lurks in the folded arms, the earthward mien,
" Else why his fellows shun? delay were sin;
" Speed thee, good Asem! o'er his musing sweep,
" And bring him to our speech." O'er the lone steep
The Apostate lean'd. If e'er unhallow'd lust
Wreck'd human heart, and headlong to the dust

Dash'd ev'ry tow'ring hope, his was that heart,
And his, those blasted hopes. Could ought impart
Peace to the wretch, whose awful guilt denied
The atoning blood of Christ? where could he hide
From bursting wrath, outcast of earth and Heav'n,
Like mighty Cain, unpitied, unforgiv'n?
" Wretch! wretch!" and deep his bursting groans gave way,
" The blessed privilege to kneel and pray
" For ever lost! the hopes of bliss above
" Abandon'd all for earth-born Woman's love!
" Yet she, for whom thy soul is black with shame,
" Laughs thee to scorn, nor canst thou justly blame."
Desperate he sank upon his knees, and cried,
" Have mercy, Jesu!" sudden at his side
" Traitor!" a voice exclaim'd, thou self-betray'd!
" Think not our Prophet sleeps; this thirsty blade
" Leaps from its home, on blasphemy like thine
" To write revenge in blood." With wrath divine
Flash'd Asem's look. To scape the light'ning blow,
Confus'd, bewilder'd, o'er the embattled brow
The Apostate sprang! the gloomy depth below

Yawn'd fearfully. No buoyant wing was nigh
To save; headlong he fell, with piercing cry;
A plash, and all was hush'd! E'en Asem's frame
Thrill'd to the death-fraught sound; his eye's wild flame
Was quench'd with pity. To the dizzy height
He rush'd; the fatal gulf was black with night,
And mock'd his anxious gaze. A blazing brand
He seiz'd, and round him calls a trusty band;
They thread the downward track, and, winding slow,
Skirt the rock's base, and reach the scene of woe
Mark'd by a torch, which, high on topmost steep,
Hung like a lonely star. There broad and deep
Slept the dull fosse; as o'er its waveless breast
Flash'd the red brand, a turban gleam'd confest.
'Twas his, the Apostate's! ev'ry fault forgot,
The gen'rous Monarch mourn'd his wretched lot.
But short his grief; faint peer'd the morning light,
And other cares his anxious thoughts invite,
The promis'd signal, and the expected fight.

There is a God that heeds the broken heart,
Binds up its wounds, and acts the Saviour's part.

Friend to the wretch who has no friend beside;
Is there, who dare his hallow'd writ deride?
Blasphemer, cease! that mercy why provoke
That hears thee, yet forbears, the wrathful stroke?
Is his arm shorten'd, that it cannot save,
Or is thy creed, no dawn illumes the grave?
O, when that dawn shall burst thy parted tomb,
Angels shall weep, and Demons mock thy doom.
Why will ye die? impatient to forgive,
Divine Compassion calls, and bids ye live;
Points out the path eternal bliss to prove,
And asks one sole return, thy grateful love.

All shall decay; this earth, so passing fair,
Yon azure Heav'n, where Suns unnumber'd glare,
Shall fade to nought. Before the Eternal throne
Amid the gen'ral wreck, thou, Man, alone
Shalt stand erect. Thou, face to face, shalt see
That God, who wept, who bled, who died for thee.
Blest, if thou shrink'st not from the unclouded blaze,
And love and mercy meet thy stedfast gaze.

O, who, that scann'd the rock's precipituous steep,
Could deem the wretch surviv'd the desp'rate leap?
Yet Edmund died not; his repentant cry
Heav'n pitying heard, and will'd not he should die
Thus steep'd in guilt. The Eternal fiat flew,
Fate dropt his shaft, and, mutt'ring, slow withdrew.
Midway in air, where the rock's rifted side
A fost'ring screen, and scanty mould supplied,
A mighty Cedar, in lone grandeur hung,
O'er the deep gulph its giant branches flung.
Its wide-spread arms their timely aid oppos'd,
And round the senseless wretch securely clos'd.
Rous'd by the shock, forgetful of her young,
The jealous Eagle from her eyry sprung.
Ne'er was more wondrous scape to sinner giv'n,
His life reserv'd for penitence and heav'n.
Slow came returning sense; was it a dream?
Cradled in air he lay, unhurt his frame,
Amid the buoyant shade; above, the glow
Of countless stars, a fearful depth, below.
He gaz'd the neighb'ring steep; its naked side
How could he scale, and ling'ring death avoid?

Some voices swell'd beneath; for him alone
That anxious search, and Asem's alter'd tone.
Scarce could he Nature's struggling cry restrain
But better thoughts prevail'd. "To die is gain,
" If death admit to Christ! be mine to boast
" A Martyr's faith, ere with the Pagan host
" I hold communion more." With anxious eyes
Again he scann'd the steep; new hopes arise.
Was it a cavern's mouth from whose dark womb
The branching cedar grew? its lonely gloom
Seem'd fraught with life; along its shadowy void
A shape of fitful light was seen to glide.
Soon o'er the verge a steel-clad Warrior hung—
'T'was he, his friend in arms! burst from his tongue
St. Aubyn's name. Yes, now before him stood
He, whom so late his heart's deep curse pursued.
How chang'd that heart! its ev'ry pulse was now
Contrition for the past. From bough to bough
Cautious he stept, and grasp'd the outstretch'd hand
That dragg'd him forth, like drowning wretch, to land.
That duty done, the transient warmth was o'er,
St. Aubyn's look unwonted sternness wore.

" E'en thus to meet! thy saviour God denied!
" I deem'd that foul report thy truth belied.
" That robe, that varying cheek, all, all, proclaim
" Thy damning guilt! thy faith, thy King, thy fame,
" Should with a wall of brass have fenc'd thee round
" Impervious e'en to fate. What Demon wound
" His hellish spells around thee, thus to write
" Apostate on thy brow? tho' blackest night
" Whelm my best hopes, tho' chains and death be mine,
" Ne'er shall my heart its heav'n-taught creed resign."
" Cease, cease, thy words are daggers! if the groan
" The contrite Sinner pours, at yon bright throne
" Meet no repulse, shall erring Man deny
" A Brother's claim? Yes, foul apostacy
" Has stain'd my soul. Well may'st thou start! now rain
" Thy curses on my head! Like outcast Cain
" I cumber this fair earth. Yet could'st thou read
" My deep remorse, e'en thou would'st intercede
" To lead me back to God. Thou knowest too well
" I sought thy life. O, 'twas some Fiend of hell
" In beauty's guise, that wove the fatal snare!
" I sold my glorious birthright for despair.

" But list my tale; if, when thou know'st my fate,
" Thou can'st not pity, yet thou will not hate."
Of banish'd peace, of Conscience mining worm,
With'ring, with slow decay, his wasting form,
Of Youth's best hopes, by desp'rate guilt o'erthown,
Whose stain no tears can cleanse, no pray'rs atone,
As spoke the penitent Wretch, St. Aubyn's soul
Responsive beat to Pity's soft control.
" Such is my tale;" thus clos'd the heart-breath'd strain,
" Yet more—those angel charms, that fir'd my brain
" To deeds of frenzy, now no feeling move
" Save deepest loathing. Yet for Woman's love
" I 've wreck'd my soul. O, join my pray'rs to Heav'n!
" Death has no terrors, if I die forgiv'n."
" Thrice blessed change! still, still, I hold thee dear!
" Witness this close embrace, this rapt'rous tear.
" O, can I doubt? for penitence like thine,
" Exulting Angels plead, at Mercy's shrine."
" Hark" Edmund cried, " that distant trump! 'tis she—
" Again! We must be brief. Our destiny
" Hangs on dispatch; if, as I trust, this cave
" Is with thy dungeon link'd, it yet may save

" From ling'ring death." Onward he fiercely broke,
While deeds of proudest daring fir'd his look.
Threading the low-brow'd maze, the dungeon-cell
They reach. Dread house of woe! its hopeless knell
Where oft Distraction rung. " Deserted still!
" Rous'd by tumultuous shouts, whose lengthen'd peal
" Reach'd this deep-chamber'd vault, to upper day
" My Guards impatient sprang." " Blest chance! away,
" We're spar'd the flow of blood. In those loud cries
" I read our safety; wilder yet they rise—
" The Crisis fast approaches; o'er thy steel
" Fling these coarse robes, lest its bright flash reveal
" Our stealthy step." 'Twas done, no bars impede
Their upward route. At length from durance freed,
They issue forth; 'twas madd'ning uproar all,
Like the loose rout of some high Festival!
Faint beam'd the stars. Morn trembled o'er the sky.
Hope beckon'd on—the barrier gate was nigh—
Retreat were hopeless now. Well Edmund knew,
Why round the gate the impatient Myriads grew
One close, dense mass. Sudden each ruder breath
Was hush'd. 'Twas but a moment; from beneath

The signal trumpet swells! fierce from the Crowd
Burst answering shouts of transport; scarce more loud
The mighty Thunder's voice, when rocks around
Reverberate the roar. Trembles the ground
As thro' the gates with headlong rush they sweep
Mocking restraint. "Now, now, we chance may reap
"Our harvest hopes. Yet mark! whate'er we meet,
"Be it thy long-lost Page, O, guard thy feet!
"Pause not, or all is lost!" By eye or tongue
Unquestioned, borne amid the billowy throng,
They wind the downward path. Their anxious gaze
Caught the lone pass, beyond whose gloomy maze
'Twas safety all. Sudden, in mad career,
St. Aubyn paus'd, tho' hostile swarms were near!
Was it some air-drawn Vision? yet the same
His garb, his gentle looks, his buoyant frame.
E'en at his side that well known bugle hung
Oft with whose notes Dunelmia's woods had rung.
'Twas he, his own lov'd Page! around him pour'd
Obsequious Chiefs, like slaves to greet their lord.
Whence was this homage? whence the rapt'rous joy
Hailing with rival shouts a simple Boy?

Forth had he rush'd, provoking certain doom;
An iron grasp call'd scatter'd reason home.
He turn'd—'twas Edmund, whose imploring brow
Spoke mild reproach, as pausing oft, and slow
He onward mov'd. Rous'd from his fatal dream,
His rashness glar'd confest, and stung with shame
He sprang to follow. As the tell-tale Sun
Gilded the face of things, the pass was won
Where Freedom smil'd, One backward glance they threw,
No hostile foot pursued; full in their view,
Its tow'ring crest bath'd in morn's rosy flood,
In lonely majesty proud Thoron stood.
Thro' secret wilds, scarce pervious to the day,
The bold Adventurers urg'd their restless way.
At length, impatience flashing in his look,
" My brave Deliv'rer!" from St. Aubyn broke,
" Tell if thou canst, for yet across my brain
" Dances the wondrous Vision, whence that train
" Of mean, and Noble, that with wild acclaim
" And servile knee, to one of vulgar name
" Like vassals, bow'd? my own lov'd Page, e'en he
" Whose gentle cares long cheer'd o'er land and sea

" My weary pilgrimage!" A pause ensu'd.—
" Few moons are past, since for thy heart's best blood
" I madly thirsted, fir'd by jealous rage,
" And He, the unconscious cause, thy gentle Page!
" Start not incred'lous; wonders claim thy ear,
" Yet scarce will meet belief. The hostile spear
" Has round thee harmless sung, but fiercer far
" Than wildest perils of insatiate War,
" Unseen, unknown, companion of thy way,
" Has danger fenc'd thee round. By night, by day,
" E'en in thy Father's halls, still on thy feet
" It hung assiduous; yet its look so sweet,
" So innocent its smile, thy generous breast
" Reck'd not a foe, in guise angelic drest."
" Mock me not thus! I drink with wilder'd ear
" Thy dark speech, Edmund; ha! a starting tear
" Springs to thine eye; rack me no more, declare
" What perils fence me round, what shape they wear."
" The shape of female Loveliness, of charms
" That well might wake a rival World to arms!
" That high born Maid, whose fatal smile to gain
" I brav'd an angry God, with cold disdain

" Mock'd my vain suit; yet She, unknown, unsought,
" Guis'd as a Page, fame, country, all forgot,
" Disdain'd not thee!" Abrupt in mid career
St. Aubyn paus'd; " hence with thy ill-tim'd jeer!
" 'Tis idle mock'ry; yet I gaze thy brow;
" 'Tis stampt with truth, I cannot doubt thee now."
He sank against a rock. Unheeded rose
The warning voice, that spoke of hov'ring foes.
He heard it not; the wondrous past return'd,
And his rapt soul with strange emotion burn'd.
O! he were less than Man, whose heart's dull stream
When Beauty woo'd, and self-love fann'd the flame,
Leap'd not with quicken'd bound! in Woman's smile
There lurks a spell, that with resistless wile
Steals the charm'd sense. Stern Reason drops the shield
To Woman's witchery constrain'd to yield.
O, ne'er did tale of more devoted love
Thrill mortal ear, or fiercer passions move!
His thoughts were Chaos, yet unmix'd with pain;
Oft had he gaz'd, when rav'd the midnight Main,
The gentle Boy; no murmurs scap'd his tongue;
But ever at his side, his tale or song

Cheer'd the lone hour; blest if his duteous zeal
Won a lov'd master's smile. His wild appeal,
When Albion's cliffs peer'd beauteous o'er the sea,
Again he seem'd to hear. "On thee, on thee
"An Orphan leans! ere long, thy travell'd feet
"Will tread thy native bow'rs: none springs to greet
"A wretch like me; nor home, nor friend have I—
"Cast me not from thee." Still the impassion'd Boy
Clung round his knees, in ecstacy of grief,
Midst vows of endless truth. The high-wrought Chief
Swore on the Cross, he ne'er should sue in vain;
His arms should shelter, and one home contain.
Up sprang the Youth; with the sweet promise blest,
Eye, lip and cheek, the rapt'rous change confess'd.
He kiss'd the sunny brow; the downcast look,
The burning blushes, no suspicion woke!
Such were the scenes, that from his yielding soul
Swept other trace, and reign'd without control.
"Wake from thy trance, ere friendship warn too late!
"Think not of one, whose smile is link'd with fate;
"E'en thee, the Fiend betray'd!" the Dreamer woke,
Rous'd by the appalling charge; his alter'd look

Indignant flash'd. "Nay, start not! well I know
"The proof will wring thy heart. The Syren's brow
"Seem'd pure as infant dreams, her lips' soft tone
"Discours'd sweet music—Who, save Heav'n alone,
"Can read the secret soul? when captive led,
"Couldst thou suspect those hostile toils were spread
"By one so lov'd, so cherish'd?" "God of truth!
"I shrin'd him in my heart; the grateful Youth
"Like my good Angel seem'd: had other tongue
"Than thine, thus question'd, to the sland'rous wrong
"My blade had quick reply'd. When the proud foe
"Broke o'er my sleep, my heart's first rush of woe
"Was all for him! lost in the midnight wild,
"Should some dread chance o'ertake the wand'ring child!
"I shudder'd at my fears; I urg'd in vain
"My callous guards, and dragg'd a heavier chain.
"Thro' the wide world I seem'd his only care,
"My smile was triumph, and my frown despair."
"Yet She betray'd thee! sang thee to repose,
"Seiz'd all thy arms, and warn'd thy lurking foes.
"Was this well done? scarce past the midnight hour,
"Since her proud vaunts shook Thoron's lofty tow'r.

" While shouting myriads hail'd the Trait'ress home,
" Where thou? a tenant of the dungeon gloom.
" Was this well done? nor thou alone her prey,
" E'en now thy Friends in arms, whose rich array
" Breaks beauteous o'er yon cliff, with headlong sweep
" Rush on her toils." Sudden the neighb'ring steep
Gleam'd bright with flashing steel, and trumpets bray'd,
And armour rang, and steeds impatient neigh'd.
Rous'd by the stirring scene, " I thank thee, God!"
Cried Edmund, as the Cross triumphant rode
In banner'd pomp, " and thou, blest symbol, hail!
" Be mine to die, if deep remorse avail,
" Beneath thy hallow'd shade." The Moslem guise
They doff'd indignant, as, with eager cries,
The glitt'ring tide roll'd on. When throng'd around
The pilgrim host, with faith's mild emblem crown'd,
Edmund bewilder'd gaz'd. Was it some dream?
Some glorious vision, soon with darken'd beam
To sink to hopeless night? delicious tears
Cours'd down his cheek, calming the boding fears
Of tyrant Conscience born. That weakness past,
His alter'd look unwonted splendour cast.

His was the Warrior's step, the Warrior's frame,
Nerv'd to some daring deed; his words of flame
Thrill'd every heart; he pointed Thoron's tow'r
O'er which, quick glancing, peer'd the turban'd Pow'r,
" There end our toils; win but that castled steep,
" The Crescent prostrate lies! like light'ning sweep,
" And scale the airy nest; no common prize
" Will crown the attempt; the Moslem King defies
" And dares ye to the assault. To us 'tis giv'n
" To launch, with fatal might, the wrath of Heav'n
" O'er this devoted land. Thrice blest the hour
" Big with fair Sion's fate! One effort more,
" The glorious work is done." Each pilgrim shook
His brand with sterner grasp. In ev'ry look,
Scanning with eager glance the dizzy steep,
Flash'd high resolve. The moments seem'd to creep,
Ere the death-sign be giv'n; like hounds they stood,
Straining upon the slip, athirst for blood.

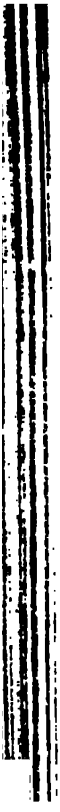
But he, who erst, in glory's bright career,
Sprang like a meteor, now with idle spear
St. Aubyn mus'd apart. The infuriate cries,
The threats of deep revenge, that scorn'd disguise,

He heard, and shudder'd; those devoted tow'rs
Shrin'd the sweet Soother of his lonely hours,
His gentle Page, whose mild enchantment stole
Endear'd by mem'ry o'er his soften'd soul.
Should the war-tempest wreck yon lordly seat,
That tender flow'r be crush'd by hostile feet!
Yet he had sworn to save! in Nature's sight
What viler outcast than the perjur'd Knight?
As swept these thoughts tumultuous o'er his brain,
Burst the wild trump, the onslaught pour'd amain.
He paus'd no more; the headlong rush he join'd,
While his heart heav'd with feelings ill defin'd.
His first resolve, amid the dire debate,
Strict to redeem his vow, and leave the rest to fate.

END OF BOOK V.

MATILDA.

BOOK VI.



THE SEA SHORE.

'TIS Eve's ambrosial hour: o'er Nature's brow
With fresh'ning wing the sea-born zephyrs play.
Amanda, come! thy fav'rite page forego,
And watch the glories of declining day.

Here let us sit reclin'd; the ambient air
Is rich with fragrance from the Violets bed;
How oft like thee, lone flow'r, does Merit fare,
And hide in secret shades the modest head!

See, at our feet the world of waters shine!
On its broad breast Eve's gorgeous splendours sleep.
Some upwards dart, and some with level line
Shoot o'er the wave, and light yon distant steep.

The white sail gleams beneath the shadowy cloud
That sweetly marks the Ocean's silver line.
Still to the ravish'd gaze new beauties crowd
Scarce seen, ere lost, like glimpse of bow'rs divine.

What lulling sounds harmonious soothe the ear,
The wave's slow murmur and the dipping oar!
Hark, 'tis the Fisher's song! his children dear
Hail the lov'd voice, and welcome him to shore.

The song goes on, and, as its ditties flow,
Claims from the circling group the genuine tear.
It tells a tale of such disastrous woe,
The wife, the children, shudder as they hear.

It tells, how once, nor distant is the day,
His comrades sought the fatal sand-bank's side;
There eager toil'd the busy hours away,
Alas! forgetful of the rising tide.

'Tis night; in vain the anxious Mother sighs,
In vain the Wife the unpitying tempest braves;
Nor Son, nor Husband shall salute their eyes,
They lie entomb'd beneath the roaring waves.

Blest be the tear, that trembles in thine eye,
While thus the strain of heart-breath'd sorrow flows!
The song is o'er; then hush the rising sigh,
And let this glowing scene thy grief compose.

O such a scene might stay the Pilgrim's feet,
Soothe his lone heart, and bid its throbbings cease!
Such scenes, methinks, the parted Spirit greet,
By Angels welcom'd to the realms of peace.

Faint and more faint the sinking splendours gleam;
Night's creeping shadows with the prospect blend.
E'en thus, Amanda, fades life's fairy dream;
Ah! let our thoughts to Nature's God ascend.

MATILDA.

BOOK VI.

WHILE War's rude din shook Thoron's crested head,
Along yon wilds, in length'ning terror spread,
'Twas deepest stillness all! nought met the eye,
Save one wide stony waste, one burning sky.
There rocks were pil'd, within whose chamber'd womb
Vast caves extend; now Robbers haunt the gloom
Once tenanted with dead: the Pilgrim's gaze
Oft scans these giant-works of other days.
'Twas such a lonely vault, whose cool retreat
Two Trav'lers gain'd, opprest with toil and heat.

The one a Minstrel Boy, whose slender form
Seem'd poor defence 'gainst Life's unsparing storm.
Nor for himself that brow of deep despair,
Tho' his scant scrip deny'd the morrow's fare;
Pale, ghastly pale, stretch'd on the flinty bed,
An aged Hermit bow'd his silvery head.
" Matilda," at the call the Minstrel flew,
And shiv'ring knelt to catch his last adieu.
" Matilda, we must part! for thee alone
" I fain would live, but Heav'n's high will be done.
" Not far from hence on Carmel's sainted breast,
" Is Julian's grave—O might I share his rest!
" Yet thus to leave thee! here where all around
" Is silent horror, where nor voice, nor sound,
" Breaks the dread calm, save the lost trav'ler's cry
" Whose bones oft blast the sight. O might we die
" Together thus!" " Father!" and as she spoke,
A momentary splendour fill'd her look,
" Are these thy lessons, which with thirsty ear
" So oft I 've drank, and still would hope to hear?
" They charm'd away despair; the glorious theme
" Was resignation, and is all a dream?

" Shall all those blessed truths to nothing fade ?
" Shall the staff fail us, when we claim its aid ?
" It cannot, must not be ; whate'er betide,
" Christ is my rock, for vain all help beside."
He heard, he smil'd, her hand he feebly press'd,
" My better angel " Death o'erpower'd the rest.
As o'er her heart the dread conviction came,
A pang of desolation smote her frame.
Her feelings seem'd to wither—sob nor groan
Escap'd her—ev'ry sense was chill'd to stone.
Long thro' the cave unbroken silence slept,
Still that pale form its death-like stillness kept.
O, for some lov'd one's voice, whose thrilling strain
Might pierce the gloom fast gath'ring o'er her brain,
Might melt the tear, now frozen at its spring,
And stay the soul already on the wing !
It comes ! that voice ! it breathes of Home's sweet joys,
Knocks at the heart, and ev'ry pulse replies.
She starts bewilder'd ! on her burning brain
With hands close prest, to catch the sound again.
It comes ! wild rang her scream, Hope wing'd her feet
As forth she rush'd the well-known cry to greet.

Some red-cross Warriors, where a deeper shade
The rock projecting flung, were careless laid.
But he, their Chief! "Edmund," she feebly sigh'd,
And sank exhausted at his courser's side.
  Ere leap'd the wilder'd Rider from his seat,
What female springs with readier arm to greet?
Leila, who late near Nile's prolific breast
Welcom'd the Wand'rer to her bow'r of rest,
'Twas she, who rush'd with piercing cry to aid,
And wept the change a few short moons had made!
'Twas all she could: hers was the will alone
To soothe distress, the pow'r was wholly gone.
To join her Lord, she left the lonely shade;
Some prowling Franks beset, and captive made.
  The astonish'd Knight in dumb amazement stood,
Hung o'er the scene, and doubted, as he view'd.
On Syria's distant shore! in Minstrel guise!
A cave's lone inmate! where those jealous eyes,
Those arms that fondly nurs'd her op'ning bloom,
When all her world, and all she wish'd, was home?
Yet thus to meet! a flow'r so fair, so frail,
Expos'd to storms might make the stoutest quail!

Whence too that Slave, that breath'd in accents low
Matilda's name, midst bursts of artless woe?
How known? where met? he burn'd the tale to hear;
His eager wish was yet chastis'd by fear,
Lest some dark tale of horror thrill his frame
Of deed unknightly, or of virgin shame.
Sudden she starts! She points with hurried air
The neighb'ring cave, and rushes wildly there.
Her friends pursue: they reach the vault of death,
And, entering, gaze with awe-suspended breath.
Scarce Leila could the whelming shock sustain,
As all the truth, like lightning, swept her brain.
There hung the Mourner o'er the silent dead,
Press'd the white lip, and rais'd the unconscious head,
Watch'd the fix'd look, in glare unmeaning set,
And fondly talk'd, as life were ling'ring yet.
"Edmund! thou Leila too!" at length she cried,
"What richer blessing could my God provide
"Than thus to meet? think, think, how dread to die
"No grave, no friend, to drink our latest sigh!"
The Warrior-band, that gather'd round to hear,
Disdain'd not now the tribute of a tear.

" Dear to my heart! if Edmund's cares avail,
" Home yet shall bless thee with its mountain gale.
" The dead now claims our care. Be ours to pay
" The last sad honours to this unknown clay.
" Matilda, speak! whence this fresh burst of grief?
" Why cling around the corse? We must be brief,
" The Foe prowls haply near." " Said'st thou, unknown?
" How had these rayless orbs with rapture shone,
" These lips with blessings teem'd, hadst thou been here
" To cheer life's parting hour! Still far and near
" We sought thee, side by side; his constant theme
" Was Julian's Child, till death dissolv'd the dream."
As Edmund heard, thro' ev'ry tingling vein
Thrill'd her dark speech; it seem'd some maniac strain.
" Brother! nor be thy Sister's suit denied,
" Come, kneel with me, ere Earth's cold bosom hide
" These lov'd remains. O, gaze, with alter'd brow,
" Thy Grandsire's silent corse, for thou, e'en thou,
" Art Julian's long-lost Child!" She grasp'd his hand,
In silent awe he knelt at her command,
Kiss'd the pale cheek, the brow of livid hue,
And scarce could doubt, yet scarce believe her true.

Midst bursting sobs, whose source was purest joy,
Matilda gaz'd, and bless'd the sweet employ.
" Edmund! methinks his spirit floats above,
" And smiles acceptance of thy debt of love.
" Now bid thy friends the last dark home prepare,
" Nor will I shrink the mournful task to share."
" Matilda! round those tow'rs, that gleam afar,
" Close the fierce Franks, and pour resistless war.
" When captur'd Thoron yield, as yield it must,
" Its ramparts broad and high shall shrine his dust.
" Midst shouts and groans the victor Cross shall wave,
" And blood of Moslems crown his glorious grave."
She heard, she shudder'd at the kindling eyes,
The impatient murmurs that around her rise.
" Edmund! that heart, whose pulses sleep in death,
" Joy'd not in blood; 'twas mild as infant's breath.
" Taught by that pow'r, that bids distinctions fall,
" Whate'er their creed, he wept, he pray'd for all.
" E'en here, made sacred by his parting sigh,
" Here be his rest, till call'd to bliss on high."
By its own softness Innocence prevails,
And tears o'ercome, where force impetuous fails.

The Warrior band, altho' unus'd to feel,
Smooth the stern look, and speed with rival zeal
The mournful rite. What wild infuriate yell
Bursts from without, like some prophetic knell
Of hovering woe; they come! their turban'd foes
Sweep thro' the cave, and round their victims close
Resistless. Where the spear, the faithful steed,
Their never-failing trust, in desp'rate need?
Dire was the shock; by fearful odds beset
The Christian star, midst streams of carnage, set.
'Twas Asem led the foe; with piercing scream
In vain distracted Leila call'd his name.
Her voice, her presence, seem'd with tenfold hate
To nerve his arm, and speed the work of fate.
He deem'd her echoing shout, excess of joy,
Her wild appeal, a mandate to destroy.
While pour'd the turban'd flood on ev'ry side,
Scarce peer'd a helm above the raging tide.
'Twas now with one proud stroke to end the fray,
The Moslem Chief to Edmund mow'd his way.
He, faint, o'erspent with toil, with stagg'ring feet,
Recall'd his ebbing pow'rs the shock to meet.

'Twas but a moment! pow'rless by his side
Fell that bold arm, that late a world defy'd.
Fierce on his victim bore the headlong foe;
Matilda's bosom intercepts the blow!
She, rous'd to maniac strength, in danger's spite,
Broke thro' the throng, to part the unequal fight.
The minstrel vest, now stain'd with purest blood,
Well Asem knew, and mute with horror stood!
" Asem!" cried Leila, as she sprang to aid,
" If this be war, O let thy murd'rous blade
" Be ever sheath'd! Was it for scenes like this,
" We left Nile's peaceful bow'rs, our home of bliss?
" Well may'st thou drop that steel whose frenzied blow
" Has plung'd thy soul in never-dying woe!
" Rouse thee, bid slaughter cease! let mercy plead
" For that lost wretch, by numbers doom'd to bleed!"
He gave command—Life's proffer'd boon was vain,
Death was less dreadful than the Moslem chain.
'Twas with his sword the indignant Frank replied,
And, whelm'd by odds, with soul unconquer'd died.
While cheer'd the insulting Victors, as he fell,
E'en Asem shudder'd at the frantic yell.

What tho' it spoke the hard-fought struggle won,
He almost wish'd the glorious work undone.
O, he had done a deed, whose blasting pow'r
From conquest's wreath its brightest blossom tore !
As droop'd the death-pale flow'r on Leila's breast,
" O may thy cares, by fav'ring Alla blest,
" For oft, sweet Leila, has the battle-wound
" Own'd thy auspicious skill, once more be crown'd
" With wish'd success !" Hope wing'd him to her side—
" That Christian Knight, he moves !" she eager cried,
" Unlace his helm"—'Twas done, and full to view
Was Edmund's brow expos'd. Well Asem knew—
High swell'd his heart, triumphant flam'd his look,
Wild thro' the cave his laugh exulting broke.
" 'Tis he, he lives ! O, victory doubly sweet !
" The Apostate wretch lies helpless at my feet.
" Welcome, proud Frank, reserv'd for fiercest woes !
" Our Prophet's deadliest wrath shall round thee close.
" Haste, bear him hence, and back to Thoron's steep
" Speed we our march !" Like vengeful demons sweep
The victor band, to seize their ill-starr'd prey,
Heedless of Leila's cry. " I charge ye, stay !

" Whence this wild rage, the brow of ominous gloom ?
" Asem, what mean they ? think of wrath to come,
" And peril not thy soul. Kneel here, and plead
" For mercy, if thou can'st ! See, with rude speed
" They drag him forth ; restrain thy murd'rous crew,
" Or Leila's curse be thine, if harm ensue !"
" Leila, I owe thee much, but fearless own
" I owe our Prophet more ! our creed, our throne,
" This wretch has mock'd. The turban grac'd his head,
" And round our King his trait'rous toils were spread.
" He scap'd—be mine thy deepest curse, if now
" He mock my grasp ! thou point'st that dismal blow—
" Alas, I weep with thee ! pass one short hour,
" When lodg'd my weighty charge in Thoron's tow'r,
" Again we meet." Away he fiercely broke,-
As fearful of reply ! in his stern look
One master passion reign'd. An erring creed
Fann'd the wild flame, and doom'd the wretch to bleed.

Faint grew the steeds' quick tramp ; the parting sound
Smote chill to Leila's heart. She gaz'd around—

Eve's gathering shades a deeper horror threw,
The ghastly dead seem'd fraught with life anew.
Swift thro' the gloom strange shapes appalling broke,
And hideous faces scar'd her shudd'ring look.
One form, slow moving, glided to her side;
She would have spoke, her tongue its aid denied!
" Sweet Lady, thus to meet! the bow'rs of Nile
" Where last we met, how bright their sunny smile!"
That voice! it swept like music o'er her ear:
" If thou art he, by Asem priz'd so dear,
" That far-fam'd Leech, for godlike skill renown'd,
" Now prove thy boasted art! this bubbling wound—
" O, save her if thou can'st! 'tis that lost Maid
" Whose wand'rings woke thy tear, that claims thy aid."
Rous'd by the thrilling cry, in wild alarm,
He rais'd the bleeding form with sinewy arm,
And bore without the cave. Eve pour'd around
Her cooling airs, and dew'd with tears the ground.
  Fann'd by the breeze, her tresses' raven flow
Stream'd o'er her face, like shades o'er mountain snow.
While the rapt Seer his work of mercy plied,
In pale suspense hung Leila at his side.

E'en he, tho' vers'd in scenes of desp'rate pain,
Shar'd all her pangs, and fear'd his efforts vain.

Still rag'd the war round Thoron's tow'ry crest,
And ne'er did Fame for nobler prize contest.
Should the Cross float o'er Thoron's captur'd wall,
The holy City totter'd to its fall.
The unwearied Franks their vast machines prepare,
And all the dread artillery of war.
Perch'd in their airy nest, midst ribs of stone,
Mock'd the proud foe each vain attempt o'erthrown.
Huge rifted rocks, resistless in their weight,
Roll thund'ring down, and speed the work of fate.
Rous'd from repose, affrighted Echo cries,
Thro' all her haunts in wild distraction flies.
The trembling doves that long with silence shar'd
The unbroken wilds, by din unwonted scar'd,
Flee far away. Night brought her hour of rest,
And all save Man, the welcome boon confess'd.
The stern besiegers, foil'd yet undismay'd,
Pant for revenge, and summon art to aid.

They sheathe the sword, suspend the dubious fray,
Pierce the hard rock, and mine their arduous way.
Like darkling moles, their ceaseless toil they ply;
As one retires, successive bands are nigh.
Hush'd was the war: from Thoron's swarming brow
Gaz'd the rapt foe the alter'd scene below.
There, midst the crowd his dragon crest display'd,
The Soldan stood, and there the Warrior Maid.
Beauteous she glitter'd like the morning star,
Decking with smiles the rugged front of War.
In that proud glance, that rich commanding grace,
Conscious of high descent, what eye could trace
The gentle Page, cheering with playful wile
His lonely Lord, whose fond approving smile
Was all he wish'd? Those hours seem'd like a dream,
Mocking her present pangs. No common flame,
'Twas wild idolatry, that o'er her flung
Its mighty spell. When the loud larum rung
His strange escape, the lightning's awful stroke
Had scar'd her less. The midnight sally woke
Uncertain hopes; the desp'rate van she led,
Reckless of life, when life's sole charm was fled.

She fell—a sable Knight sprang swift to aid,
Then turn'd abrupt away. The rescued Maid
" O, part not yet! with one kind greeting bless
" Thy faithful Page." Screen'd by the thronging press
That to its source beat back the bursting tide,
He heard the thrilling cry. In vain to hide
E'en from himself he strove, how his rapt ear
Hung on the well-known tones! He hover'd near,
Till to their fastness fled, the baffled foe
Indignant gaz'd their slaughter'd friends below.

But she, the high-born Maid, retir'd apart,
With dreams of rapture fir'd her swelling heart.
That life, so late with deepest gloom deprest,
Was bright with hope, with new-born radiance blest.
Yes, they had met! his once-lov'd Page he knew,
Redeem'd his vow, and to her rescue flew.
Yes, they had met! She deem'd love's sweetest prize
Already won, and with delicious sighs
Her panting bosom heav'd. " How blest my lot
" In some lone bow'r, by all, save one, forgot,

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" His God, his country mine! oppos'd to love
" Weak is our Prophet's creed; no pow'r above
" Can shake my purpos'd soul; a long farewell
" Scenes of my Youth!" Eve's gathering shadows fell,
As thro' the crowded courts she glided slow,
Like guilty wretch. She reach'd the dizzy brow;
The tramp of feet, climbing the painful steep,
Arrests her step. Thro' the wide portals sweep
A turban'd troop; a Christian Knight they bore,
Unhelm'd, his armour hack'd, and wet with gore.
'Twas Asem's voice, that, echoing o'er the rest,
Mock'd his deep groans, midst many a bitter jest.
As near they pass'd, 'twas he, the Apostate Knight,
Whose vows inspir'd disgust! a strange delight
Play'd round her heart; no stern revenge was there,
" Lost wretch, be mine to save! yes, thou shalt share
" My flight, and he, whose image fills my mind,
" Shall bless the deed." With feelings scarce defin'd
She rush'd, she question'd Asem—on his tale
Hung breathless. " Haste, ere fiercer woes assail!
" Back to the cave of blood, where burning eyes
" Look for thy swift return. The hour denies

" A longer speech; this wretch imprison'd deep,
" Be mine the care, his due desert shall reap."

The Captive woke. As thought resum'd its sway,
'Twas hopeless horror all! shut out from day,
Immur'd in dungeon gloom, a baffled foe
Fir'd with revenge, to hurl the midnight blow.
Yet might that blow be mercy! o'er his brain
Creep pining Want, and Famine's ghastly train.
Whence is that Shape, in fleecy light array'd,
That glides to view? 'tis she, the martyr'd Maid!
She points her bleeding breast—with arms outspread
He springs to clasp—the mournful Phantom fled.
" Matilda, stay! O, why so quickly part?
" Say that thou liv'st, and ease my tortur'd heart.
" Alas, I rave in vain! the fairest flow'r,
" Pure as that Heav'n where it shall bloom once more,
" Lies with'ring, all for me; Soon shall we meet
" Blest shade! Methinks the tread of murd'rous feet
" Comes fitful on." Sudden a flickering ray
Stream'd thro' the gloom, the low-brow'd door gave way—

She, for whose sake, by hellish lust subdued,
He brav'd both earth and heav'n, before him stood!
" Christian, thy doom is seal'd! O, ere too late
" Wake from thy dream of woe! behind me wait
" The Ministers of wrath; repent and live,
" Forswear the Cross, and Alla will forgive."
" Sorceress, away! I lov'd thee once, but now
" Be Death my bride! curst be that sunny brow
" That snar'd my soul; thee, and thy Prophet's lore
" Alike I spurn; lead on to death"—" Once more
" Rash Knight! I sue. O, heed the friendly call,
" And quit a cause, now tott'ring to its fall.
" E'en now I gaz'd from Thoron's lordly tow'r,
" And mark'd but one of all thy boasted pow'r.
" Swift flew my shaft. I laid the loit'rer low,
" The last poor triumph for Ismena's bow.
" Back to my heart that shaft will sooner leap
" And drink its blood, ere Thoron's hallow'd steep
" Yield to thy hated race!" " Lead on to death;
" On Jesu's name shall rest my latest breath.
" Yet one last boon! a Christian Maid—her fate
" Tell, if thou canst: When Asem's band of late

" Beset the cave, methought her dying groan
" Rang in my ears." " She lives! 'twas I alone
" Whose unbought cares within these walls convey'd
" And snatch'd from hov'ring death the lonely Maid.
" Thee too, when long in senseless slumber bound,
" Anxious I watch'd, and staunch'd each gaping wound.
" When all around abandon'd thee to die
" Who then despair'd not? know, proud Frank 'twas I!
" Unwonted comfort o'er thy cell I pour'd,
" And e'en thy God on thy behalf implor'd.
" Well may'st thou start! I fling the mask aside—
" O couldst thou read my heart! be thou my guide,
" To lead me to thy God!" Was it a dream
Mocking his raptur'd ear? thro' all his frame
Thrill'd her impassion'd tones; his bounding heart
Leap'd at the call, that wore no trick of art,
But seem'd all truth. A Cup that stood beside,
The Prisoner's fare, its limpid wave supplied
To speed the hallow'd work. " Thrice wondrous hour!"
Cried the rapt Chief, " methinks heav'n's joyful bow'r
" Opes at thy cry, and harps exulting ring
" To class thee with the blest. This simple spring

" Whate'er thy guilt, can wash thee white as snow;
" Sister in faith! I sign upon thy brow
" Our sacred symbol, which the Fiends in hell
" Tremble to view. Thou weep'st! each tear 's a spell
" To purify thy soul." She knelt, she wept,
Spite of herself, o'er all her senses crept
Resistless awe. 'Twas now no mimic part,
'Twas Nature's genuine tear, its source the heart.
'Twas past; her better Angel fled amain,
And foul hypocrisy resum'd its reign.
Why slept thy thunder, Heav'n? thy mystic rite
Again profan'd, to mask a deed of night!
  Sudden, beneath their feet, in murmurs low
Swell'd a strange sound, like notes of lengthen'd woe!
While with unalter'd brow the Captive stood,
A rush of terror chill'd Ismena's blood.
It issued from the earth, it seem'd to say,
" Tremble, thou wretch, the torturing Demon's prey,
" That mock'st the Christian's God" That wretch was
she!
She clasp'd his knees in silent agony;

" Cheer thee, my Child! methinks at this blest hour
" Our thoughts should freely blend. Round Thoron's tow'r
" Tho' sleep the battle-din, yet deem not thou
" The Christians baffled. Their suspended blow
" Waits but the word; like ocean backward borne,
" It but retires, more awful to return!
" E'en now alternate bands, no pause between,
" Mine this proud rock, unthought of and unseen.
" Soon shall the swarms, at midnight's silent hour,
" Burst from its womb, and o'er these ramparts pour
" Resistless!" Rous'd to frenzy as he spoke,
Ill could her soul the taunting triumph brook.
Yet with mild tone, " now Prudence bids us part,
" Lest prying eyes suspect my alter'd heart.
" That Maid, now doubly dear, since link'd in creed,
" Be mine to save; thy God will bless the deed;
" Not this alone—where crowning Heorta's steep
" Thy lordly tow'rs o'erhang the ocean deep—
" Well may'st thou start, from Moslem lips to hear
" The lov'd familiar name! yes, scenes so dear
" My feet have trod. It chanc'd, unseen, unknown,
" Where slept the cloister'd dead, I stray'd alone.

" Awe-struck I listen'd; cries of anguish wild
" Broke thro' the gloom; The mother and the child
" E'en at the Christian's shrine, in dread debate
" Rous'd the lone echoes! by conflicting fate
" Involv'd in strife, e'en while the heart o'erflow'd
" With purest love; thou wert the theme; her God
" The Maid invok'd, to register on high
" Her solemn vow! the Mother's rolling eye
" Flash'd frenzy: with demoniac scream she rush'd—
" My voice was heard, the unnatural storm was hush'd.
" Yes, from the dead, they deem'd, the warning came,
" That snatch'd from awful doom the high-born dame!"

He stood alone. So sudden was her flight,
Seem'd all the wondrous past a dream of night!
But she, whose voice yet thrill'd his ravish'd ear,
Whose vows of penitence he deem'd sincere,
Rush'd to betray, her eyes inflam'd with hate,
And blast those hopes, now big with Thoron's fate.

The thoughtful King amidst his Chiefs she found;
Loudly she spread the lurking peril round.

" E'en now I sought the Captive's dungeon cell,
" Fraught with those arts, I know to wield so well.
" I wound me round his heart; I bade him read
" My soul, which waver'd in our Prophet's creed.
" Fool that he was! he grasp'd the flatt'ring snare,
" And bar'd the secrets of the Christian war.
" Foil'd by our castle's strength, our stubborn foes
" Despair not yet, but deepest art oppose.
" This rock, the boast of ages! in its womb
" Hides a stern band, all sworn to seal our doom.
" Rouse ye, brave Chiefs, ere o'er our midnight sleep
" Burst the wild storm, and win the sacred steep!
" Let the proud Frank his boasted God invoke;
" The Sons of Alla ne'er shall wear his yoke!"
High on a tow'r she stood, like one inspir'd,
And her fierce cry a fiend-like triumph fir'd.
Sudden she falls! the King, in wild amaze,
Sprang with his train, the prostrate Maid to raise.
Unknown its course, unseen its airy speed,
Deep in her bosom sank the feather'd reed.
The crimson tide gush'd hideous from the wound,
And horror shook the trembling courts around.

But she, as faintness dimm'd her swimming view,
Glanc'd on the shaft, and quick that glance withdrew.
Yes, she that morn had launch'd the fatal dart
With scornful laugh to pierce a foeman's heart!
Where now her boast, that dart should backward leap
And drink her blood, ere Thoron's lordly steep
Be stain'd by hostile foot? The Christian's God
Was rous'd to vengeance, and his awful rod
High rais'd in wrath! "forgive, too mighty Pow'r!
"I yield, I yield, the unequal conflict 's o'er!"
Woe to the Crescent! rang the general cry,
And sternest Warriors gaz'd with moisten'd eye.
"Save her, thou godlike Leech, and share my throne!"
No flatt'ring voice reply'd where hope was none.
Sudden with feeble tone, "Weep not for me
"My second Father! 'tis high heav'n's decree
"And we must part. O, grant my dying pray'r"—
"Thy dying pray'r! whate'er it prove, I swear
"Ere heard, to grant." "In dungeons deep and lone
"Pines many a captive wretch; be open thrown
"Their iron doors!" indignant murmurs rose—
She heard—"Thy pledge is past! thy soul's repose

" Hangs on thy truth; yet more, that Christian Knight,
" Command him here." Her eye flash'd vivid light.
'Twas but a moment! with the streaming gore
Life ebb'd apace; that voice! one effort more
Ere wholly lost! as Edmund knelt beside,
" Thine is an awful God," she feebly sigh'd—
" Plead for my erring Soul;" she gasp'd for breath,
One long-drawn groan, and all was hush'd in death.

Thro' realms remote, where'er the Crescent sway'd,
The fearful tidings wrapt the land in shade.
The gorgeous pomp that mock'd the unconscious dead,
Proclaim'd, a great One of the earth was fled.
The captive Franks, to life and light restor'd,
Bless'd the stern virtue of the Moslem Lord.
True to his pledge, e'en Asem fail'd to move;
Man aw'd him not, he fear'd the wrath above.
Yet there was one, with whom so soon to part
Disturb'd, in reason's spite, the Monarch's heart.
When first Ismena led, by pity sway'd,
Where pale, exhausted, lay the Christian Maid,

Told how she sprang a brother's life to save,
When the fierce conflict shook the desert cave,
Offering her snowy bosom to the blow
That pierc'd its spotless shrine, the tale of woe
Rous'd all a Father's love. Her friendless fate,
Amid the din of war, the cares of state,
Haunted his ev'ry step. Health dawn'd apace,
And with it, all those nameless charms which grace
Youth's roseate prime. A feeling strange and new
Oft to her side with spell seductive drew
The unconscious King; but stronger grew that spell,
When a fond Kingdom's hope, Ismena fell
Widowing his lonely heart! War was his pride,
But ev'ry deed to courtesy allied
Mark'd his career; that voice, whose shout was death,
The blade once sheath'd, was mild as Summer breath
Soothing the pangs it caus'd. E'en He, whose fame
Shar'd with the forest King his strength and name,
Oft prais'd his high-born foe for kindness shown,
Flinging o'er War a splendour not its own.

But who could deem that gaz'd the tranquil brow,
That spirit droop'd which never quail'd till now?

Destruction low'r'd o'er Thoron's trembling wall,
And the proud fortress totter'd to its fall.
The Saxon Miners with unwearied skill
Sap the vast rock,—the pond'rous ramparts reel.
Link after link was snapt the warrior chain,
Till his lov'd Asem swell'd the heap of slain.
Fast round the Crescent clos'd the deep'ning gloom,
Or bonds, or death, the inevitable doom.

Oft when the sword a short-liv'd pause enjoy'd,
The anxious Soldan sought Matilda's side;
There on her oft-told tale he lov'd to dwell
Which, still repeated, own'd the same soft spell.
Such sainted meekness thro' her trials shone,
The bright example serv'd to soothe his own.
That awe his presence once inspir'd, was fled,
And pure affection triumph'd in its stead.
Warm from the heart her grateful breathings flow'd
For health restor'd, and gentle cares bestow'd.
Full well she knew, why darker grew his brow,
Why her fond sallies pass'd unheeded now!

Once as the widow'd Leila by her side
Wept her lone fate, which friendship's voice defy'd,
The Monarch came; his swelling heart reveal'd
Its hoarded griefs, from all his Chiefs conceal'd.
" Nor for myself these whelming fears appall,
" 'Tis for those long-tried friends that share my fall.
" This day 's our own, but, ere to-morrow's sun,
" The Cross will triumph, and our race be run.
" The gallant few, that yet survive the war,
" Submission spurn, and for the worst prepare.
" Tho' to blest bow'rs on Azrael's wing they speed,
" I would they liv'd! from present dangers freed
" E'en yet my voice to victory may cheer,
" This foul disgrace be lost in rapture's tear!
" O, for some friend, since vain our last defence,
" To sound yon host, and win safe passage hence!
" Would, Asem, thou wert here!" Was it a crime
To soothe a prostrate foe? there was a time
When e'en Matilda with indignant brow,
Had check'd the hope that burst impatient now.
" Hear, mighty King! what tho' my Country's foe,
" I were a wretch to mark, unmov'd, thy woe!

" I owe thee life—from ling'ring bondage freed,
" The Christian captives bless the godlike deed.
" Edmund, my brother,—he, thy plans shall aid,
" Visit yon camp, and better thoughts persuade.
" Thou know'st what cause has still detain'd us here,
" Thy earnest wish, and Leila's anxious tear;
" Tho' Freedom pointed to our native bow'r,
" That wish, that tear, delay'd the parting hour.
" Eve wears apace—the attempt ill brooks delay—
" And O, be comfort thine, ere dawning day!"

'Twas done—the Knight, by various feelings mov'd,
Sprang to obey, where Honour's self approv'd.
As sheath'd in arms, the downward steep he wound,
What wistful eyes the castled summit crown'd.
Some heard the tale with murmurs ill represt,
While many a whisper'd pray'r the mission blest.
In hurried groups, they urge the keen debate
In dark forebodings of impending fate.
On roll the hours; with awe-suspended breath
Oft from the verge they scan the gloom beneath,
Eager to catch the armour's gleaming light,
Herald of weal, or woe. It breaks to sight!

Two Warriors climb the steep; the stoutest heart
Throbs quick, as at the well-known challenge part
The massy gates. " Christian!" the Soldan cried,
" We thank thy zeal, to Knightly truth allied.
" Here, where our anxious partners throng to hear,
" Discharge thy trust, before the general ear.
" One fate involves us all." " Rouse thee, O King!
" The storm will burst, ere wave the Morning's wing.
" Thy vengeful foes, that mine this tott'ring wall,
" Like rav'nous wolves, anticipate thy fall.
" Before the German Chiefs, for Albion's coast
" Scarce boasts one son throughout the num'rous host,
" I laid thy proffer'd terms. In close debate
" Apart retir'd, they scann'd thy future fate.
" Midst wild portentous shouts, that echoed wide,
" The council clos'd; all hope within me died.
" Summon'd at length, 'Sir Knight! the Moslem's pray'r
" We freely grant; on this cross'd hilt we swear,
" That Castled nest once ours, our humbled foes
" Shall undisturb'd depart. Night soon will close.
" Haste, bid descend, ere Morning's tell-tale eye
" Dawn on their shame!' This tone of mockery

" Alarm'd me not; mindful of thee, once more
" I sought the castle path. A mingled roar
" Of laughter smote my ear; quick steps pursued—
" I turn'd—this English Knight before me stood,
" My lov'd, my honour'd Sire. ' Beware,' he cried,
" ' Yon treach'rous host; with honey'd words they hide
" Their foul intent. Yes, should the credulous foe
" Descend yon steep, the exterminating blow
" Dooms all to instant death. I strove in vain
" To rouse to nobler thoughts; with proud disdain
" They mock'd my scruples. Haste, yon fort regain
" And spread the warning round.' " From tongue to tongue
Impatient murmurs leap'd, till from the throng
Burst one indignant cry, and sabres wav'd,
And eyes defiance flash'd. No fears enslav'd;
One heart, one man, they swore, if doom'd to die,
To fall not unreveng'd. The dawn drew nigh,
And still they quail'd not. Whence that arrowy light
That like a meteor shoots along the night?
Sudden it falls; a scroll, that breathes of joy,
Rides on the glowing shaft. Yes, aid was nigh!

From Egypt's farthest bound, the Crescent pride
Pours its embattled swarms, the mighty tide
Increasing in its course. What words can speak
The heart's enthusiast swell, the moisten'd cheek,
As flew the tidings round? With kindling eyes
Prostrate on Alla's name they call, and rise
Renew'd with giant strength. Let History tell
How fierce Destruction, with infuriate yell,
Pursued the Cross; tell, how the victor crown
Dropt from its brow, too rashly deem'd its own.
Reck'd not the Franks, that Heav'n had wrath in store
For lying lips, that mock'd the badge they wore.
That humbled foe, that late for mercy sued,
Now bath'd his conquering steel in Christian blood.
Wild rag'd the Franks; the camp with discord shook;
Each ey'd his neighbour with suspicious look.
But when the rumour came, which doubt defy'd,
That rous'd to vengeance, in o'erwhelming tide
The embattled East roll'd on, 'twas chaos all
And wild'ring terror! deaf to duty's call
First fled the Chiefs; the now-deserted host,
In rival flight, rush'd head-long to the coast,

And fear'd, till Tyre's proud walls their safety crown'd,
A foe in ev'ry bush, in ev'ry sound.

Yes, 'twas a Father's voice! joy, wonder, shame,
Alternate thrill'd Matilda's panting frame.
She, who had fled, by lust unhallow'd driv'n,
That home, parental love once made a heav'n,
Now shrank appall'd his awful form to meet;
She fear'd a curse, where smiles were wont to greet.
" O spare me, spare me! at thy feet I fall,
" Upbraid me, spurn me, I deserve it all!"
But blest reverse! as from the dead restor'd
He clasp'd his Child, so lov'd, so long deplor'd.
" Spurn thee! O let these wild embraces prove
" My boundless transport, my unalter'd love!
" Speak on; thy tones breathe o'er my desolate heart
" Link'd with past joys, in which it once had part.
" I've mourn'd thee long; I deem'd from scenes below
" Thy spirit fled; and shall I spurn thee now?
" One fear alone—O, speak without disguise!
" Thou canst not, no, thy faith all change defies."

" Father! in all my griefs, for griefs I 've known,
" My hope, my trust, has lean'd on Christ alone.
" But hence, from public gaze retir'd apart,
" I've much to ask to calm my swelling heart."

At length 'twas morn. Their fitful slumber o'er,
The gallant remnant sprang to arms once more.
But where the foe? they gaz'd the depths beneath
Where lances bristled, whence the shout of death
And neigh of steeds with din incessant rose,
Now desolate and lone! such deep repose
Boded some latent snare; a cautious few
Descend; as spread the search, their wonder grew;
No living form appear'd! the camp was strew'd
With wreck of scattered arms; untasted food
Prov'd the strange panic, that to coward flight
Drove the late braggart host. From deepest night
The Crescent soar'd triumphant; Fate's dark hour
Hung o'er the Cross; thus will'd the Eternal pow'r.

The Soldan now, the storm of war represt,
To softer thoughts resign'd his yielding breast.

By Syria's practis'd dames assail'd in vain,
He bow'd at length to Love's seductive chain.
O would the Christian Maid her faith disown,
To Alla bend, and share the Eastern throne!
Yes, when they met, a smile of pure delight
Play'd round her lip, and charm'd his dazzled sight.
That smile, he hop'd, tho' Reason mock'd the dream,
Would linger still, when love should crown his theme.
Yet oft his heart a jealous pang would prove,
Envying the license of paternal love.
Scarce from her Father's side his child would part,
Chain'd by a tale, that aw'd her shudd'ring heart.
Her Mother's spectre-form, her naked feet
Pierc'd by the flint, thro' wild, thro' crowded street
The gaze of idle throngs, the lordly hall
The jewell'd robe, the bow'r, abandon'd all,
Her deep, deep penitence, O 'twas a chain
Of direst woes that thrill'd her burning brain
Till thought was agony! On bended knee
She vow'd, unaw'd by toil of land and sea,
To track her bleeding path, and strive to cheer
Her eve of life. "Father! she yet is dear;

" Thou wilt not curse her! ne'er can I forget
" Her cares for me; I own the mighty debt.
" Thou, Brother, too! well may thy shiv'ring frame
" Be thus unmann'd. What tho' thy Mother's shame
" Be tost from tongue to tongue, let us fulfil
" Sweet Nature's laws; she is our Mother still.
" List, while I rend the veil of mystery
" That shrouds the past. Edmund! 'twas love of thee
" (Nay, start not) that subdu'd each maiden fear,
" And lur'd me thus from home. Yet here, e'en here
" Methinks some Pow'r unseen my wand'rings led!
" I knew not then thy birth; with deepest dread
" That Nature shudder'd at the unhallow'd flame
" I madly nurs'd! but now the guilty dream
" Is burst. It chanc'd, as 'midst an Arab throng
" Their bounty I repaid with harp and song,
" A Hermit saw and question'd. O'er my ear
" Thrill'd the sweet tones—yes, thine I seem'd to hear!
" We bar'd the mutual heart; O wild amaze!
" O source of wonder, gratitude, and praise!
" Then glar'd the awful truth, then glar'd confest
" The incestuous toils, that snar'd my captive breast.

" He was thy Grandsire, o'er whose lonely grave
" Moans the sad night-wind in yon desert cave!
" Here too, bereft of all his soul held dear,
" Soldier of Christ, his short but brave career
" Thy Father clos'd! on Carmel's flow'ry side
" Wrapt in that dreamless calm, in life denied.
" But thou, my brother, when he talk'd of thee,
" His age-dimm'd eye was bright with ecstacy.
" Thou art his Julian's child! still side by side
" Cheer'd by the oft-told tale, thro' regions wide
" We sought thee, Edmund!" " Daughter, speak! what mean
" Thy darkling words? thy tale, if right I ween,
" Is rich with strange event. On Edmund's brow
" Sits keen impatience, every link to know
" That forms the chain." E'en from the midnight hour
When a false meteor from her native bow'r
Seduc'd her credulous step, she wound the maze
Uninterrupted, save when loud amaze
Burst fitful forth; with eye and ear intent,
As if entranc'd, Attention breathless bent.

" So young, so school'd in woe! God's arm alone
" Could guide thee thus, my child, thro' realms unknown.
" Trials like thine, which as a summer cloud
" Have o'er thee past, e'en stoutest hearts had bow'd.
" Yes, God is with thee! and aright I deem
" His arm thy shield, when thought reviews my dream,
" Ere from my desolate halls I desp'rate sped
" To track a guilty wife. Beside my bed
" ' Pursue her not,' some Angel-vision cried,
" ' Remorse like hers, to penitence allied,
" Finds grace above; hoist thou for Syria's shore
" Thy early sail! give vain despondence o'er,
" And leave the rest to Heav'n.' The warning sound
" Rang in my ears, till on this hallow'd ground
" I leap'd impatient. Can I doubt the call
" That shap'd my course to Thoron's leagur'd wall?
" I find thee here, thee, whom I deem'd no more
" A denizen of earth! this hostile shore
" Smiles like a home; cheer thee, my gallant boy,
" And share with me these opening gleams of joy!
" Be ours, to emulate this wondrous Maid,
" Whose faith shone brightest in the deepest shade."

" Not such was mine ! by Woman's love enslav'd,"
From Edmund wildly broke, " I madly brav'd
" Heav'n's fiercest wrath ! the turban sham'd my brow—
" I trampled on the Cross—O, may my vow
" Breath'd night and day, to atone my desp'rate sin
" By penitence and pray'r, acceptance win !
" But let my rebel heart its treason bare,
" And, if ye can, then bid me not despair !"

O, could that dire confession fail to move,
Which spoke the soul's best hopes betray'd by love !
So strange, so varied, was the eventful theme,
De Clifford deem'd the whole some fearful dream.
She, a fond Nation's boast, the brightest gem
Whose lustre wreath'd the Eastern diadem,
Who round the Apostate wound her toils unblest,
With dying lips her convert heart confess'd !

" Boy, weak is Man oppos'd to Beauty's snare !
" Deep is thy guilt, but warrants not despair,
" Think, had no contrite pray'r, with pow'rful spell,
" Arm'd thee with strength to burst these bonds of hell !

" Rouse thee! our creed rejects such hopeless woe
" That dwells alone with harden'd fiends below."
" Yes," cried Matilda, " in that wasted frame
" I read remorse, which well may pardon claim.
" Bethink thee, Edmund, she, whose earthly love
" Link'd thee with sin, may soar in realms above
" For ever blest, and haply thou, e'en thou
" The unconscious cause! lift that dejected brow;
" Think too, what sacred duties claim thy aid;
" What, shall thy Sires in foreign graves be laid
" Unwept, unhonour'd? shall no stated pray'r
" Plead for their Souls' repose, but blank despair
" Freeze all thy pow'rs? O, ere I quit this soil,
" Grant, Heav'n, one sweet reward for all my toil!
" May in one grave their mingled ashes sleep,
" And mine the solace o'er that grave to weep!"
" Enough, Matilda! how thy words of fire
" Nerve me anew, and better thoughts inspire!
" Ne'er shall my Soul's best feelings shrink to stone
" While thou—all nature would the crime disown.
" Haste, not one moment be those rites delay'd;
" These eyes shall close not, till the debt be paid.

" That duty done, what course for me is left
" Bow'd to the dust, of Man's best hopes bereft?
" A life devote to Heav'n; on this blest soil
" Mocking disease, and death, and battle-toil,
" Soldier of Christ, the incessant spear to wield,
" And the lone Pilgrim's hallow'd path to shield.
" How bright, Matilda, Youth's unsullied morn!
" No gathering clouds, of dread experience born,
" Darken'd our sunny sports, when hand in hand,
" O'er Heorta's breezy steep, and shelly strand,
" Careless we rov'd. That world we deem'd so fair,
" Has drugg'd my early cup with black despair!
" England, farewell! land of the free-born brave!
" Here is thro' life my home, in death my grave."
Grief swept his soften'd heart, with whelming pow'r,
And the stern Man became the Boy once more.

O, ne'er, Matilda, ne'er could soul like thine
Be lur'd by worldly bribes from Duty's shrine!
Thy firm unshaken faith, thy heav'nward brow,
Flash'd bright with hopes, whose source was not below.

Had the World ought, in pomp and wealth supreme,
To rouse the dazzled hermit from his dream
And win him from his God, such charm was now
Laid at Matilda's feet! With darken'd brow
She heard the Soldan's suit. "Be this, lov'd Maid,
" Thy home, thy country! our resistless blade
" Has whelm'd the Cross: a sinking cause disown,
" Embrace our faith, and share the Eastern throne.
" Think of the pow'r to bless, the sweet employ
" Thro' these wide realms to pour the tide of joy!
" Think of the millions, that shall round thee wait;
" Yes, on thy smile shall hang a Nation's fate."
He mark'd the varying cheek, the uprais'd eye,
As, sadly solemn, flow'd the grave reply.
" Of late, when scatter'd fled thy boasted pow'r,
" And deepest peril shook this tott'ring tow'r,
" How hadst thou felt, if in thy desp'rate need
" The Foe had brib'd thee to renounce thy creed?
" O doubly keen this painful blow I feel!
" No stranger lip has dar'd the bold appeal,
" But thine—I shudder at its alter'd tone.
" E'en should I yield, thy choice would link thy throne

" With foul apostacy, nor ever more
" Could wretch like me, one pray'r for mercy pour!
" Like yon bright Sun, which gath'ring clouds may hide
" But cannot quench its beams, soon far and wide
" The Cross shall soar triumphant. Tempt me not—
" 'Tis all in vain. Be endless woe my lot,
" Ere I forsake my faith! tho' weak and frail,
" No pains shall daunt me, and no bribes prevail.
" Of all thy realms, one little spot I crave,
" The hallow'd turf, that blooms o'er Julian's grave."
" 'Tis thine, and more! thy words resistless roll,
" And feelings strange o'erpow'r my awe-struck soul.
" Who shall that creed, O wondrous Maid, deride
" Thus bright with works, that shame all earthly pride?
" Thy rev'rence for the dead, so soothing sweet,
" In every bosom must an echo meet.
" Yes, o'er their graves, shall wealth and pow'r combine,
" Rich as thy love, to rear a worthy shrine.
" We part; those Christians that for mercy plead,
" Shall in their suit, by naming thee, succeed."

From Carmel's mount, as breaks the orient light,
What mingled glories burst upon the sight!
'Twas on that height the avenging Prophet pray'd,
And Baal's priests the life-blood forfeit paid.
His lonely cell at that sweet hour of prime,
The Hermit left, the hallow'd steep to climb.
Peace seem'd to greet him, as he gain'd the brow,
And gaz'd the wide-extended scene below.
The mists of night, that capp'd the mountain's head,
Like Guilt abash'd at Truth's bright presence, fled.
Earth at his feet, his canopy the sky,
'Twas one unclouded blaze that met the eye.
Here, stretch'd the mighty Sea its waveless breast,
Its glitt'ring strand with spire and turret drest.
There, lake and fortress, wood and sparkling stream,
Drank the rich lustre of the matin beam.
Yet prouder charms than these, the scene possess'd
That thrill'd almost to pain the Hermit's breast.
Here from yon parted heav'ns, the Angel throng
Messiah's birth to midnight Shepherds sung.
'Twas here, with mercy to no sect confin'd,
He watch'd, he pray'd, he died for lost mankind.

'Twas God's thrice favor'd land! the mountain gale
Seem'd as it pass'd, to break the wondrous tale.
O, who could mock that zeal, that proudly strove
In death's despite to wrest this land of love
From impious hordes? yes, from this watch-tow'r steep
Oft had he mark'd successive navies sweep,
Midst shouts of transport thund'ring to the shore,
Exulting mark'd, but all that dream was o'er!
His heart now sicken'd o'er the unburied dead,
The mighty waste of blood around him shed!
Thro' twice ten years that mountain cell his home,
Oft had he pray'd for brighter days to come.
Age crept apace—no brighter dawn arose,
And o'er the Cross still hung unnumber'd woes.
Oft on the night-wind swell'd the cry distrest,
And many a wounded wretch his pity bless'd.
The last faint beam of Hope seem'd quench'd in night,
And all was pale despair and coward flight.

At Carmel's foot, in natural beauty rose
A secret grot, the haunt of deep repose.

Thick tangled shrubs, of various scent and hue,
Round the lone glen their arms umbrageous threw.
Above, the tow'ring Plane diffusive spread
Its tent-like canopy o'er Julian's bed,
For here was Julian's grave. The burning ray
Pierc'd not the leafy screen, and far away
The world's tumultuous din. The dove's soft thrill,
The wild bee's hum, the lapse of murm'ring rill,
Sooth'd but disturb'd not, meditation's dream,
Musing Man's brief career, Time's hurrying stream.
  Oft when the way-worn Pilgrim turn'd aside
To share the frugal meal the cell supplied,
And the kind boon, 'twas all he could, repaid
With tales of war or plighted love betray'd,
The Hermit's brow would darken; 'twas a theme
That shook his soul, and dimm'd awhile the beam
Of melting charity. High swell'd each vein
As Woman's artful wiles prolong'd the strain.
Yes, he that slept beneath yon peaceful shade
Was Woman's victim! mock'd, deceiv'd, betray'd,
With blasted hopes and shatter'd brain he bless'd
The battle-wound, that gave his sorrows rest.

Once, when the storm its midnight terrors hurl'd,
And the wild thunder aw'd a silent world,
The Hermit slept not. O'er his bosom spread
Unwonted gloom. Visions of days long fled
In all their living freshness rose once more;
'Twas here, from Slaughter's crowded field he bore
The dying Julian, whose fast-ebbing life
Was pour'd to Heav'n to spare a guilty wife.
From his rude bed in wild alarm he sprang—
Thro' his dim cell again the death-groan rang!
Awe-struck he stood. As paus'd the fitful blast,
Soon pity banish'd fear; in trembling haste
He trimm'd his little lamp, and rush'd to cheer
The houseless wretch, whose moans still pierc'd his ear.
Near the cell's mouth, stretch'd on the rain drench'd ground,
A Female lay, while peal'd the tempest round.
He rais'd, he bore within, but with dismay
Turn'd from the sick'ning sight! the expanded ray
Stream'd o'er a face, so shrunk, so ghastly pale,
It seem'd akin to death. It spoke a tale

Of want, despair, and woe! the feet all bare,
Were soil'd with dust and blood; stiff matted hair
Clung round the naked head; She seem'd like one
Of God, of Man abandon'd, all alone
Amid a stormy world. Her eyes' fix'd glare
Was reft of consciousness, and earthly care
Seem'd all too late. He tried his pow'r to save,
And pray'd that pow'r might disappoint the grave.
On death's dark verge, thro' many a ling'ring day,
Mocking his anxious cares, the Stranger lay.
Was he deceiv'd? amid her broken sleep
Her cries for mercy murmur'd oft and deep;
And once, he idly deem'd, that Julian's name
Mix'd with the groans, that shook her dying frame.
" Lost wretch, methinks some crime of blackest dye
" Gnaws at thy heart, and points the bitter cry!
" Awake, for pardon plead, ere death surprise
" And shut the gates of heav'n! still o'er those eyes
" No speculation creeps." Scarce had he spoke,
His pray'r was heard, the alter'd dreamer woke.
Awe-struck he gaz'd; sudden with wistful brow
She scann'd his face, " where am I? speak, and thou—

" Deceive me not." " A lowly Hermit I,
" This mountain cell my home ; there tow'ring high
" Is Carmel's steep. A gleam of ecstacy
Lighted her hollow look ;" " Yes, thou art he!
" Thy look, thy voice, and this thrice hallow'd spot,
" Oft pictur'd in my dreams! how chang'd my lot
" Should inward peace, I deem'd for ever fled,
" Be mine, ere mingled with the oblivious dead!"
Calm grew her soften'd look! a holy dew
Bath'd her wan cheek, and hope sprang forth anew.
But while her soul in strength increasing rose,
Her frame grew weak, and life approach'd its close.

Asleep she lay. Across her bloodless cheek
He mark'd the smile of infant softness break.
Haply her dreams, by Angel visits blest,
Were rich with visions of seraphic rest.
She woke. " O, bear me forth!" she feebly sigh'd,
" Let Eve's sweet breath, ere Earth's cold bosom hide,
" Cheer me once more. Now shall my bursting heart
" Its hoarded guilt, so long withheld, impart!"

'Twas done. Beneath the shady rock he laid
Her spectral form. Bright shone the West, array'd
In pomp of setting sun; its gorgeous glow
Stream'd o'er the mighty deep, that far below
Its sparkling mirror spread. "O, wondrous Sea!
"And thou, fair Earth! what godlike majesty
"Crowns ev'ry charm! thou too, brave Sun! like thee
"I fade from sight, but not like thee to hail
"A glorious Morn. O'erwhelming fears assail—
"O, could I drown that voice, that cries, 'away
"Away to Judgment!' fiends in dread array
"Wait for my parting soul. They come, they come,
"With horrid shout, 'prepare to meet thy doom!'"

"Hast thou forgot," the awe-struck Hermit said,
"That all-redeeming blood, for Sinners shed?
"Hast thou forgot, tho' vast its load of sin,
"The contrite heart will sure acceptance win?"
'Twas on this gracious theme he fondly dwelt,
And pour'd the glowing truths his bosom felt.
O, 'twas a theme, at whose inspiring pow'r
Remorse look'd up, and bless'd the healing lore.

Wistful she gaz'd, as flow'd the impassion'd tide,
And ev'ry look with thankfulness replied.

" Yes, this fair world," he cried, " for Angels meet,
" Man fills with crime, and sorrow tracks his feet.
" Life's various paths all centre in the tomb,
" Yet he presumptuous, deems this world his home!
" When past Youth's sunny morn, how lone the gloom
" When Age creeps on, and Conscience counts the sum
" Of hours mispent! 'tis then the Soul will need
" The sweet remembrance of some virtuous deed.
" From Europe's farthest bound, with duteous feet,
" These hallow'd scenes successive Pilgrims greet.
" Oft from the deck, slow rising o'er the deep,
" They hail, with eager shout, proud Carmel's steep.
" Here as they paus'd my humble meal to share,
" Poor as I was, I yet could somewhat spare,
" Life's thorny path was still the unvarying theme,
" Its gloom scarce brighten'd by one sunny beam.
" Each told his chequer'd lot, how cast below;
" In woe it ended, and began in woe.

" Yes, such is life, but such in mercy made
" To lure to worlds whose glories ne'er shall fade.

" See'st thou yon bow'r, from forth whose tangled maze
" Wells the pure brook, that idly murm'ring strays
" Down Carmel's side? It shrines the house of death—
" The Pilgrim oft, with awe-suspended breath,
" Hung at my side, as ling'ring on this brow
" We talk'd of him, that peaceful sleeps below.
" O, could the false one, she whose smiles betray'd,
" Witness the wreck those perjur'd smiles have made!
" Yet come it will, that night of dark despair,
" When her loud cries shall call on God to spare."

Well might the Pilgrim list, with shudd'ring ear!
E'en she, that woe-worn wretch, whose hour drew near
Of parting life, who seem'd already dead
To this vain world, with Youth's elastic tread
Sprang to her feet! a bright sepulchral gleam
Fill'd her expanded orbs, and ev'ry limb
Seem'd strung with health anew. His alter'd guest
He gaz'd, with feelings undefin'd opprest.

She stood, like some pale tenant of the tomb
Rous'd from its iron sleep, to wait the doom
Of final wrath. " Why pause ? O, nought conceal—
" Speak, while I 've life to hear !" The dread appeal
Drew from his aching breast its hoarded store
Of martyr'd Julian's woes. " When bath'd in gore
" We bore him from the strife, what heart of stone
" Had slept unmov'd ? Not for himself, the groan
" That shook his dying frame ! Yes she, e'en she,
" Whose plighted troth was link'd with perjury,
" That fiend, whose malice crack'd the noblest heart,
" Image of heav'n, where nought impure had part,
" She was his latest theme ! he curs'd her not,
" But dying bless'd her, all the past forgot.
" O should she come," thus clos'd his parting pray'r,
" When thoughtful Age has hung her brow with care,
" To seek my far-off grave, and, bending near,
" Invoke my name, and drop one contrite tear,
" My Spirit at the call shall rise confest,
" Breathe peace, and bid her share my home of rest."
" Said'st thou, he bless'd her ?" burst her maniac scream,
" Said'st thou, he bless'd her ? or is all a dream ?"

He heard, he shudder'd. " O, thou poor forlorn!
" If the tale move thee thus, how hadst thou borne
" The woeful sight? He bless'd, yes, o'er and o'er
" He bless'd his Murd'ress!"
" 'Tis enough—no more—
" Haste, speed we to his grave!" She mock'd his aid,
She hurried down the steep—broke thro' the shade—
'Twas there, her Julian's grave! A holy calm
Fill'd the sequester'd glen; the air breath'd balm
Pilfer'd from countless flow'rs, with rich array
Gemming the broider'd floor. O'er the lone clay
In shady covert lodg'd, murmur'd unseen
The plaintive dove. It seem'd some fairy scene
Hallow'd by Peace, to shrine a broken heart
Now wrapt in dreamless sleep. She stood apart—
She gaz'd, she trembled; on the peopled air
Rose shadowy forms, that seem'd to cry, " Beware!
" Hence, thing accurst! commission'd from above
" To guard this bow'r, in ceaseless watch we move.
" Com'st thou to revel, where thy victim lies?
" Envying that rest, which now thy hate defies.

" Weep'st thou ? If sweet contrition wake the tear,
" Approach, despair not, thou art welcome here !"
She wept. The maniac strength, that nerv'd her frame,
Was gone, and quench'd her look's unearthly flame.
Tott'ring, she reach'd the grave, with feeble cry ;
Crown of her hopes ! 'twas here she wish'd to die.
" Julian, awake ! O, break thy envied sleep—
" 'Tis I, thy penitent wife—I come to steep
" Thy grave in tears. Hear me on bended knee
" Confess my guilt—O might I share with thee
" This blessed calm ! Remorse is at my heart;
" O, breathe forgiveness, ere my senses part !"
A murmur swept the bow'r, " That voice of love !
" Julian, 'tis thine ! there, there, thou soar'st above—
" I meet thy gaze—no frown is on thy brow—
" That smile breathes peace—Death, where thy terrors
now ?"

The cry was hush'd. A calm the grave might own
Wrapt the lone glen. There stood, like breathless stone,
The Hermit Seer ; the veil was rent—Yes, she
His woe-worn guest, the Child of misery,

Was Julian's bride! so strange, so terrible,
Ne'er cross'd his chequer'd path. 'Twas past, and well
Was Julian now aveng'd. But swiftly woke
More gentle thoughts. Pity, with pleading look,
Pointed the spectre-form, across the grave
Stretch'd motionless. He sprang to aid, to save—
He rais'd the prostrate wretch, but she no more
Gave answ'ring sign; Life's fitful dream was o'er!

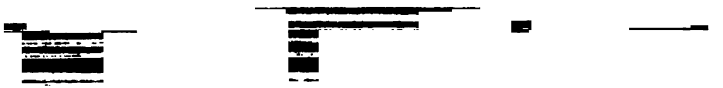
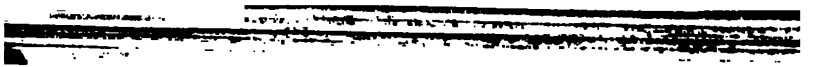
'T'was bleak and lone on Heorta's wintry steep
Where rose, dark frowning o'er the Ocean-deep,
De Clifford's lordly seat. Its gloomy pall
Gaunt Desolation flung o'er bow'r and hall.
Where now the Palmer's tale, the Minstrel's song,
That crown'd the feast and hush'd the warrior throng,
And oft, when summon'd to the Lady bow'r,
Won from Matilda's eye the pearly show'r?
The travel'd Pilgrim hails, with quicken'd feet
The far-off tow'rs, the wonted cheer to meet.

No cry of welcome greets; the idle weed
Flaunts all around, and mournful thoughts succeed.

True to his daily task, as loth to part
From scenes so closely twin'd around his heart,
On the lone tow'r the ancient Warder stood,
And gaz'd the wide-stretch'd sweep of land and flood.
A calm unwonted slept along the main,
Whence rose the Fisher's melancholy strain.
Hopeless he gaz'd. 'Twas from that far-seen tow'r
His horn's loud summons rous'd De Clifford's pow'r.
Thence too he wistful watch'd the parting sail,
Rich with the strength of many a widow'd vale.
He starts, he listens! from the wave below
Swells a faint distant note. With kindling brow
He grasps his idle horn, whose thrilling strain
Wakes from its long repose; nor peal'd in vain
The lengthen'd blast. Now many a lonely heart
That long had pin'd in solitude apart,
Leap'd at the well-known call. Suspense was o'er;
The gathering throng rush'd headlong to the shore.

On swept the white-wing'd bark, while Hope and Fear
Stood tiptoe on the beach. Wild was the cheer
That hail'd the Wand'rers home, to share at last
Its sweet repose, endear'd by perils past.
But who is she, that near yon bending Knight
With matron step slow moves, and calm delight?
'Tis fair Matilda. She, long mourn'd as dead;
But not as erst, with Youth's elastic tread,
Bounding elate of heart o'er Heorta's steep,
Ere the cold world had taught that heart to weep!
Now the veil rent, that dimm'd her dazzled view,
And dress'd this rugged world in tints untrue,
By sad experience taught, while years were young,
What few unsullied joys to life belong,
She comes, home's halcyon scenes to greet once more
St. Aubyn's meek ey'd bride.

Ere Syria's shore
Beheld her parting sail, her heart-breath'd vow
Was all redeem'd. She reach'd fair Carmel's brow
With duteous haste. There in the morning dew
A gem, lone glitt'ring, caught her wond'ring view.

'Twas her lov'd Mother's cross, as life-blood dear,
Worn next her heart, yet how, or wherefore here?
On the charm'd air now choral voices stole,
Breathing a requiem for some parted soul.
Oft had she wept that strain to hear, but now
Unwonted sadness gather'd o'er her brow.
Swift to the bow'r, which shadow'd Julian's bed,
Led by the sound the fair Enthusiast sped.
She came. The dirge was hush'd—the train were gone—
And with the Hermit Seer she stood alone.

Thro' the deep gloom his tale of horror woke,
Soft-soothing thoughts with placid radiance broke.
" Mother!" she sigh'd, " in dying doubly blest,
" Thou shar'st in Julian's grave the wish'd-for rest!
" 'Twas more than Chance, (this checks the starting tear)
" That clos'd o'er land and sea thy wand'rings here.
" O, had my cares life's final duties paid,
" Caught thy last breath, and sooth'd thy parting shade!